

Jim Henson's™
THE STORYTELLER™
Dragons





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Jim Henson's **THE STORY**

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TELLERTM

Dragons

SON OF THE SERPENT

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THE WORM OF LAMBTON

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SON OF THE SERPENT

With "Son of The Serpent," the intention was to deviate a little from the image of the dragons we commonly see, and show that within rich Native American culture there are majestic and fascinating mythological creatures.

The story is a kind of like Frankenstein's monster, created from the pieces of amazing stories and myths of the native cultures of North America. Here, I acted as a kind of Igor, searching and digging for the necessary parts that would complete the body, while the incredible writer, Fabian Rangel Jr., would be both the scientist and the lightning that would bring life to this beautiful monster.

Much of the pieces that make up this story were taken from the Blackfoot folktale called "The Warrior That Ate The Horned Snake" and from tales of Cherokee and Lakota tribes on the Uktnea (The Horned Serpent). The other sources of inspiration were the many stories of the amazing Thunderbird, especially from the Coast Salish tribe, who relate how these mythical beings care for men who ventured into the sea. In these legends, creatures act according to their natural instincts rather than an association with good or evil, i.e. the Serpent is not deliberately malevolent and the Thunderbird reacts instinctively and irrationally, causing unexpected damage in the process.

The art of the tribes of the Pacific Northwest was the inspiration for the character design, from the graphic art from the Coast Salish to the Totem Poles. These designs are so beautiful it is hard not to be fascinated by their lines and colors.

In the end, "The Son of the Serpent" is a story that pays tribute to the native cultures of the Americas and to parents who, without hesitation, make great sacrifices.

- Daniel Bayliss



Many years ago, on the other side of the world--



--in a land as wild and untamed as can be--



--there was a *father* and his *son*.

PAY
ATTENTION,
SON.

BEFORE YOU
KNOW IT, IT'LL BE
YOU WHO NEEDS TO
PROVIDE FOR YOUR
OWN FAMILY.

I'M SORRY,
FATHER.



Most fathers often struggle with being too hard or too soft on their children.



And *this* father was no exception.

But with just a wink--



--he could set his son's mind at ease.





FATHER,
LOOK!

HMM.
SOMETHING
FRIGHTENED
THEM.



US?

NO.

SOMETHING--



--BIGGER.

It takes a lot of food to feed a beast such as the *Horned Serpent*, and the father and his son looked considerably more filling than a school of fish.



Of course, the father wasn't just a fisherman--

--he was also a warrior.



Even so, this would most certainly be his final battle.



Luckily for him--





--help was on
the way.

The *Thunderbirds*, natural
enemies of the *Horned
Serpents*, announced their
fury with deafening shrieks.

SKREEEEEE



And a furious battle rarely seen
by human eyes was underway!

CRASH BOOM
ROAR!

THEIR BATTLE
WAS TRULY
SAVAGE.

AND THE
THUNDERBIRDS
STILL HAD TRICKS UP
THEIR SLEEVES!



The father and son were
helpless against the fury
of the storm.

HOLD
ON!

And then things
got worse.

KA KRAK

Sometimes we can be *so close* to something--

SON!

FATHER!

--but fate pulls it away from us and we can do little else but watch.

NO!

THAT BETTER NOT BE THE END.

Oh, no. Don't you worry, old friend.

There is still much to tell.



The son found himself stranded on a strange island.

F-FATHER?

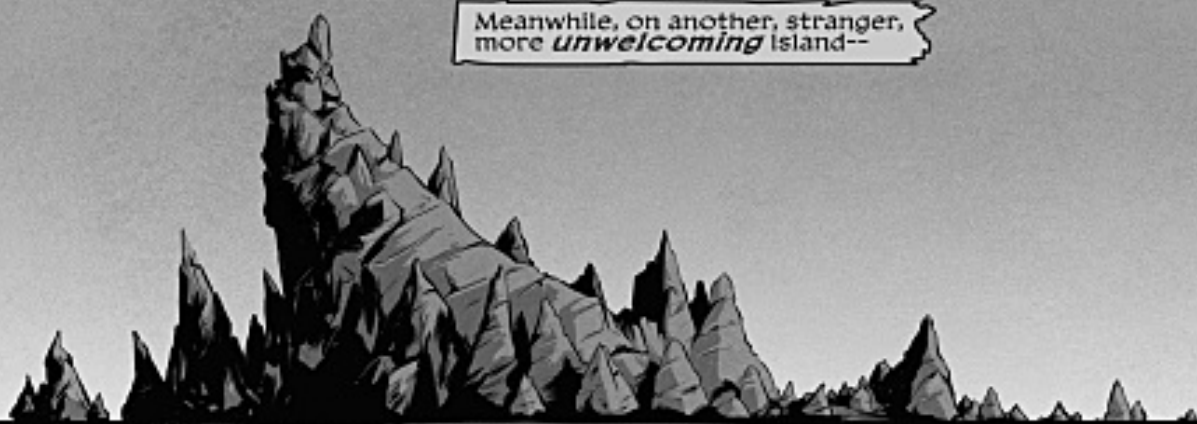
He was scared. And alone.

FATHER!

Well, not quite alone.



Meanwhile, on another, stranger, more *unwelcoming* island--



--the *father* cursed his many gods.



It would have been rather easy to give into despair at this point, but both father and son held onto a small spark of hope.

A hope that would serve to guide them in the coming days.

Time passed, and the son was able to feed himself by remembering the lessons his father had taught him.

Lessons he was grateful for.

Still, the boy was much too young to be taking care of himself--

--so a concerned *sparrow* took it upon himself to do some investigating.

I KNEW IT!

HEY, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? YOU'RE NOT GIVING UP, ARE YOU?

NEVER. BUT THIS ISLAND IS BARREN. I CAN'T BUILD A RAFT WITH THESE.

THERE ARE NO ANIMALS TO HUNT.

THERE IS NOTHING.

MAYBE I SHOULD EAT YOU!

HEY!

DO THAT AND I WON'T BE ABLE TO TELL YOU HOW TO GET TO YOUR SON.

HE LIVES?

YOU--

--YOU'VE SEEN HIM?

Off they went.

The little bird explained that circumstances weren't as dire as the father had thought.

But he would need to act *fast*.

YOU CAN GET BACK TO YOUR CHILD BUT YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME--

--AND HURRY!

You see, there was a *reason* this island was so barren of life, so gloomy, so absolutely *dreadful*.

I KNOW WHERE YOU CAN GET WHAT YOU NEED, BUT IT WON'T BE EASY.

This was the home of the *Horned Serpent*, and in order to escape it, the father would have to slay the beast.

THAT MONSTER HAS ALL SORTS OF STUFF IN THAT CAVE. IF YOU'RE LOOKING TO BUILD A RAFT, IT'S A GOOD BET YOU'LL FIND WHAT YOU NEED IN THERE.

"BUT HE ISN'T GOING TO JUST GIVE IT TO YOU."

HURRY!

HE'LL BE BACK ONCE NIGHT FALLS!

"HURRY."

EASY FOR YOU TO SAY, WINGED-ONE.

Night fell.

And with it, a silence
the father had never
experienced before.

And just as the Sparrow
had predicted, the
Horned Serpent rose
from the black sea--

--to return to his
ghastly den.

Then, with a belly empty of everything
but *fury*, the father broke the silence
with a *battle cry*!

It did *not* go unnoticed.

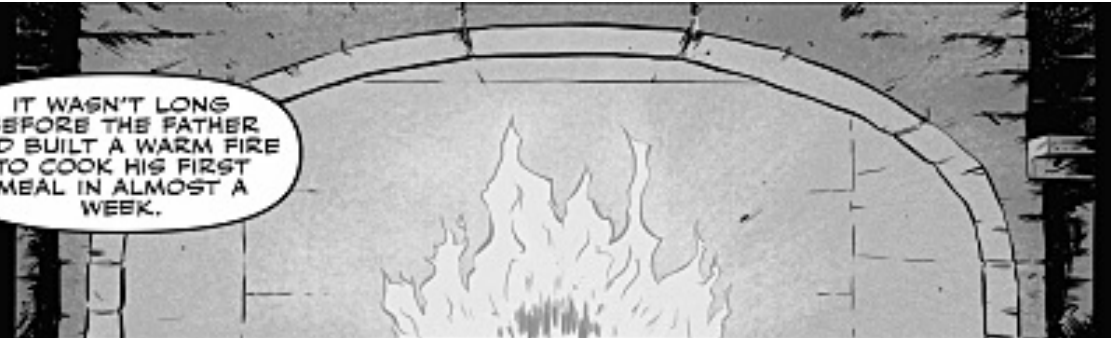
The father pushed and pushed with every ounce of strength he had left in his weakened body.

KREEEE!

KRACK

Completely exhausted and starving, the father knew there was only *one* way to get the sustenance his body would need to rescue his son.

And so a decision was made.



IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THE FATHER HAD BUILT A WARM FIRE TO COOK HIS FIRST MEAL IN ALMOST A WEEK.



AFTER ALL, COOKED MEAT IS BETTER THAN RAW MEAT. EVEN IF IT COMES FROM A SERPENT.



EVEN I KNOW THAT.



The father ate and stared up at the stars, thinking of his son.



And on the other island, the son looked up at those same stars, hoping his father would come rescue him.



And that was *precisely* what the father was going to do, as soon as he got some rest.



He closed his eyes, anxious for the morning.

But when he awoke--

--let's just say, you
are what you eat.

?!

The father tried to call out
to his feathered friend, but
all that came out was--

UH OH.

KREEEEEE!

No matter.

The father still had a job to do and he wasn't going to let a little thing like being transformed into a *monster* stop him.

In fact, his newfound form granted him the speed to make the trip rather quickly.

He was overjoyed at the sight of his son, relieved to lay eyes on him again.

YOU!

The feeling was *not* mutual.

THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!

Even though the words weren't meant for him, they still cut the father deeply.



Unable to speak, the father tried to reassure his son--



--just as he had only a few days prior.



And hoped his son would understand.



FATHER?





Reunited at last, the
father and son sped
away from the island
and towards home.



The boy's cheers of joy warmed the father's heart.

He regretted all of those stern talks he had given his son over the years.

This was a time--

--for fun.

I BET WE
CAN GET MANY
FISH NOW,
FATHER!

Unfortunately--

NO.

--It was not to last.

KRRA-KKOWW
KREEEEE!



The *Thunderbirds* did not see a father and son. They only saw an enemy to be destroyed.

And the father only saw the shore of the cove, where his son would finally be safe.



JUMP, KID!



Having ensured his son's safety--

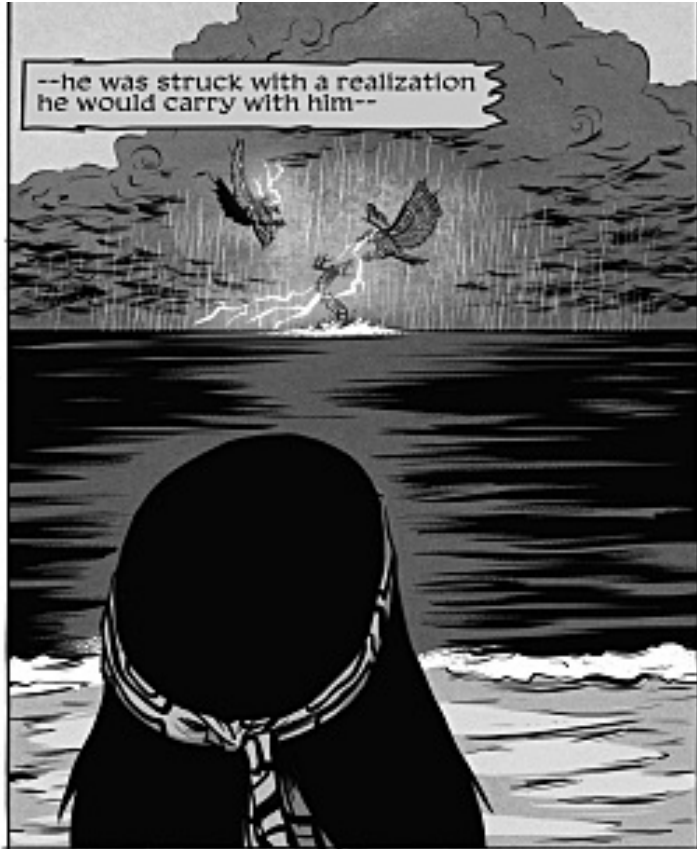


FATHER!

--the time had come to fight *back*.



As the son watched
the battle move
further away from
the shore--



--he was struck with a realization
he would carry with him--



--for the rest
of his days.

His father's love knew no
bounds. Everything he had
done, was for *him*.

For his survival, for
his happiness.



Hours passed.

The son refused to
take his eyes off the
horizon, in hopes his
father would return.



DID--
DID HE EVER
SEE HIM
AGAIN?

ONCE
MORE--

--many, *many*
years later.

When the *son* had become
a *father* himself.

He took his new family
to the shore of the
cove and hoped to
catch a glimpse of his
father.

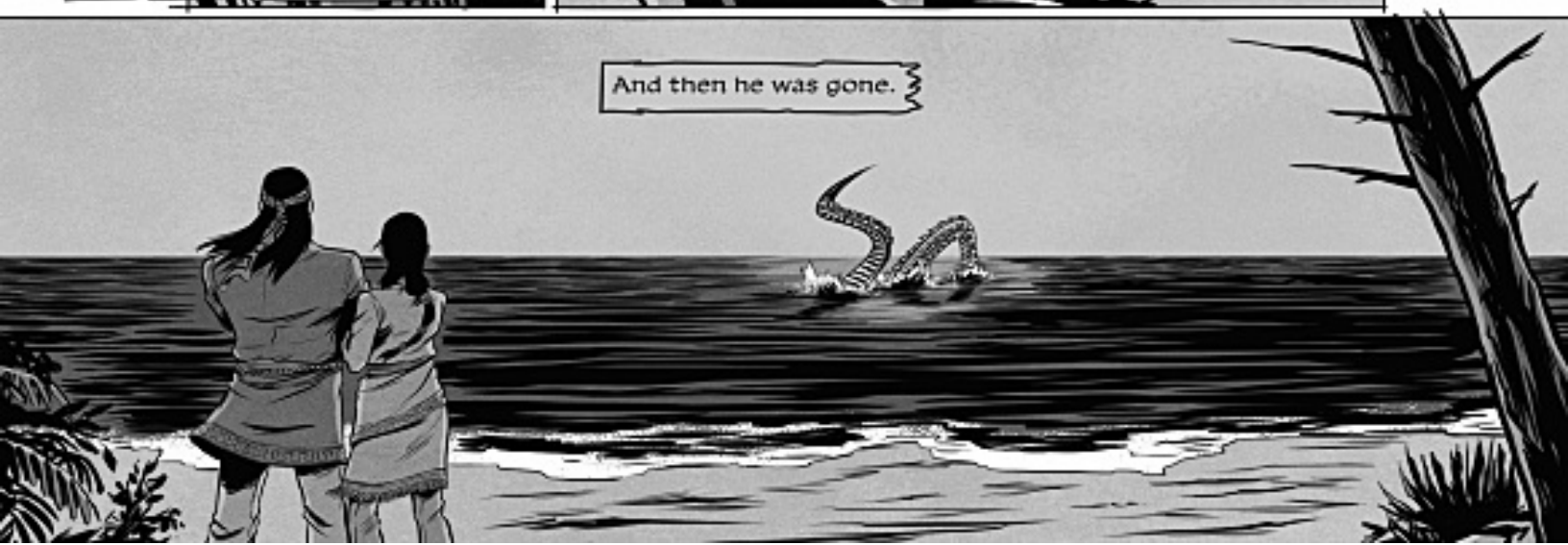
To show him his
grandson.

The serpent had
many battle scars
from countless
clashes with the
Thunderbirds.

The son looked upon his
face, wondering if any of
his father was left in the
monster before him.

And the father looked
down at the fruit of the
sacrifice he had made
many years before.

And then he was gone.





THE
END.



NOW YOU'VE
GOT ME WONDERING
WHAT *SERPENT*
TASTES LIKE.

OH,
YOU!

ALWAYS
THINKING
WITH YOUR
STOMACH.

I'LL SATISFY
YOUR CURIOSITY AND
TELL YOU IT'S LIKE
FISH WITH A DASH OF
CHICKEN.



AND HOW
EXACTLY DO
YOU KNOW
THAT?

THAT, MY
FRIEND, IS A
STORY FOR
ANOTHER
DAY.



THE END

TALE TWO COVER
NATHAN PRIDE





the WORM OF LAMBTON

"The Worm of Lambton" was adapted from a version told in the *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders* from 1866. It is filled with all the elements of legends told in ballad and song: a dark worm terrorizing a countryside, an aged lord at the limits of his health and power, an heir returning from battle to face his past, and an oracle with advice to defeating the worm that is woefully wrapped in a curse.

I was inspired to mimic Medieval-style tapestry images throughout to appeal to the real world history of the tale, since this story is grounded in the real-life ancient Lambton family and the supposed curse they had on their male descendants. In "The Worm of Lambton," that represents the harshness of the natural world and the physical embodiment of John's anger and disrespect. I wanted it to be frightful—with oily skin, rippled like a salamander and a toothy maw that nearly rivaled its length—and yet a wondrous creature. The Worm finding satisfaction in cow's milk was, strangely enough, a consistent theme in dragon and worm stories from the Northern regions of England and the Scottish lowlands. It tickled me in a child-like way to include this in the story. Lastly, in this adaptation, John makes an entirely different final decision that amusingly plays into the hands of our Storyteller and his always attentive canine companion.

I hold Jim Henson's creations very dear to my heart because they were a large part of my daily creative inspiration during my childhood. So I was guided by Henson and the spirit of *The Storyteller* to create something that could have been an episode from that treasured series.

I hope, by my highest hopes, on the jeweled heather of Worm Hill that you'll agree.

— Nathan Ride



MANY CENTURIES AGO THERE LIVED IN THE COUNTY OF DURHAM, ON THE RIVER WEAR, A YOUNG MAN NAMED JOHN.

JOHN WAS HEIR TO THE LORDSHIP OF LAMBTON AND, ACCORDING TO ANCIENT LEGEND, THE LAMBTON FAMILY "WAS SO BRAVE THEY FEARED NEITHER MAN NOR GOD."

Young John was brash, unbridled, and righteous. He held little regard for the devoted and hard-working subjects of his father, Lord Edward.

Expressing disrespect and mockery were all part of his daily dawdles.



THIS LOOKS TO BE A FINE DAY FOR FISHING IF THERE EVER WAS ONE CREATED.

Many times he cast his line--coming up with nothing but river plants and a hungry hook.

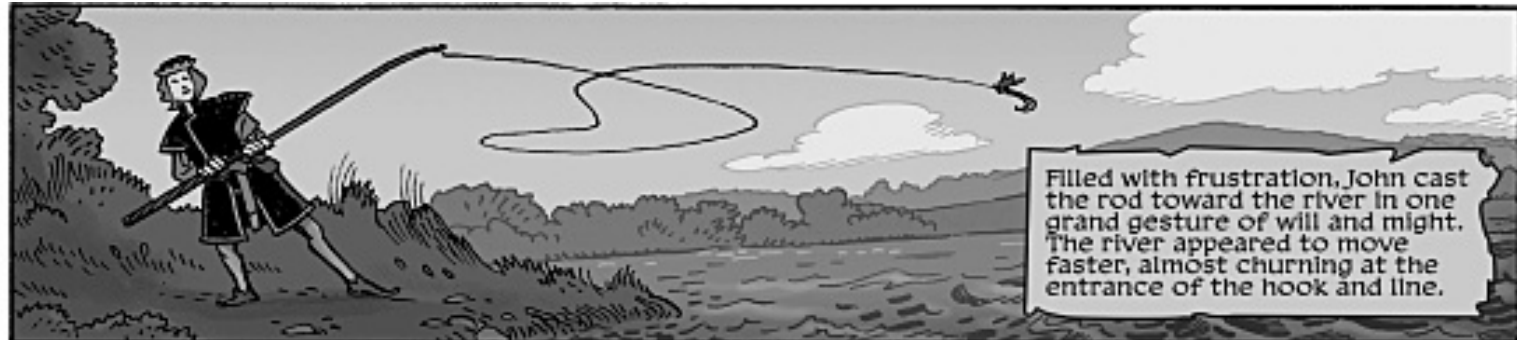
This enraged the proud hunter to no end as he shook, shook, shook his fist in the air.

I SHOULD HAVE DISTRUSTED THIS FINE MORNING. I CURSE THIS RIVER FOR PLAYING ME A FOOL! I WILL NOT BE DEFEATED IN THIS SIMPLE TASK OF CATCHING A FISH!



The next words--too ghastly to repeat--from the young heir's mouth would have made the Devil himself cringe in disgust. Villagers and servants, walking by on their way to the chapel, did not differ in their reaction to his disgraceful outburst.





Filled with frustration, John cast the rod toward the river in one grand gesture of will and might. The river appeared to move faster, almost churning at the entrance of the hook and line.



A tug! Yes, a tug that nearly wrenched him from the banks of the river.



John coaxed his strong prey to the surface. Only, he did not find a fish on his line, but instead a wriggling worm of unsightly appearance.



UGGH!
LEAVE MY SIGHT
YOU SLIMY RIVER
DROPPING.

Young John gave it not a second thought, tore it from the barbed hook and cast the creature into a well just nearby.



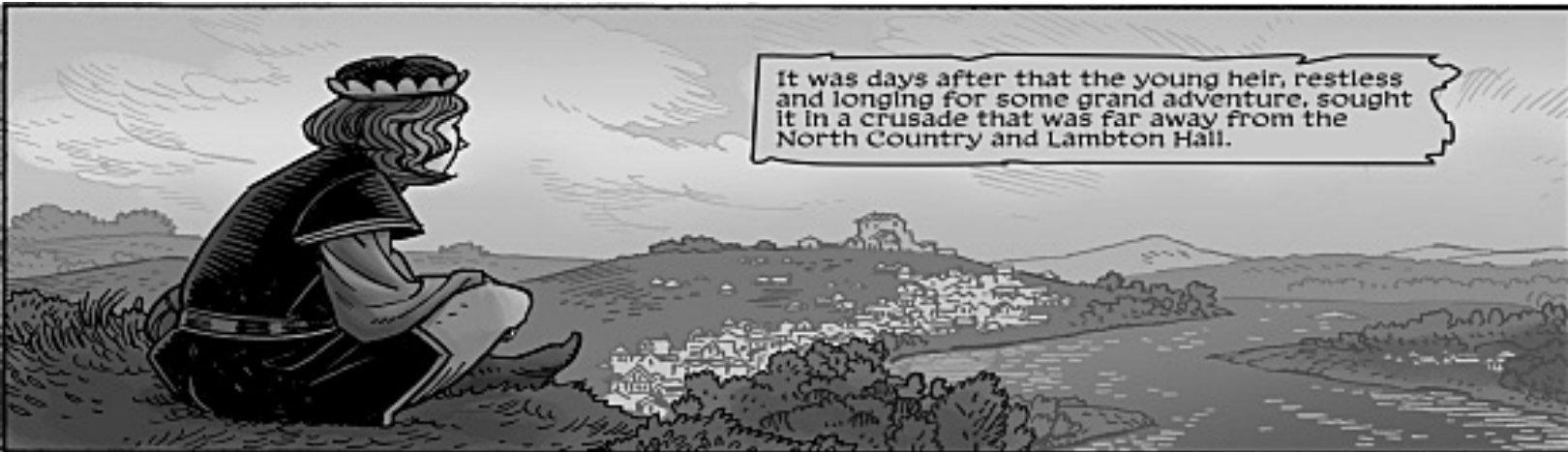
HO! WHAT
HAVE YOU CAUGHT
THIS DAY, YOUNG
MASTER!



I MAY HAVE LIFTED
UP THE FILTHY DEVIL
HIMSELF! LOOK WITHIN
THE WELL AND JUDGE
FOR YOURSELF.



AYE! 3WHUFFS
THAT IS GHASTLY! THIS,
ON THE SABBATH, DOES
NOT BODE WELL,
MASTER.



It was days after that the young heir, restless and longing for some grand adventure, sought it in a crusade that was far away from the North Country and Lambton Hall.



FAREWELL, FATHER!
I'LL HAVE MORE USE IN BATTLE
THAN WITH MY MEAGER DUTIES
WITHIN LAMBTON. PREPARE A
DINNER SEAT FOR ME EACH
TWILIGHT, AS I SHALL RETURN
ONE DAY. A BETTER MAN I
SUSPECT, WORTHY OF YOUR
GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS,
MY LORD.

LIFE HAS BEEN
TRYING FOR BOTH OF US
SINCE YOUR MOTHER'S DEATH.
YOUR ARROGANCE AND
BEHAVIOR AS A YOUNG MAN
HAS NOT WON YOU ANY FAVOR
WITH OUR PEOPLE. NOR WILL IT
BENEFIT YOU IN THE FUTURE
WHEN YOU BECOME LORD OF
LAMBTON.

BE WELL AND VALIANT IN
YOUR TRAVELS, MY LOVELY
SON. MAY YOU DISCOVER
THAT WHICH YOU SEEK IN
THE WORLD OUTSIDE
LAMBTON.



In two cycles of the moon the Worm had grown enough in length and girth to find egress from its stone confinement.

WHAA--!

It moved swiftly to a group of broad rocks, where it lay sunning itself, immobile amid the fast moving River Wear.

By night, it had found a nearby hill studded with jeweled heather and soft grasses to slumber upon.

Over time, the Worm continued to grow, and grow, and grow.

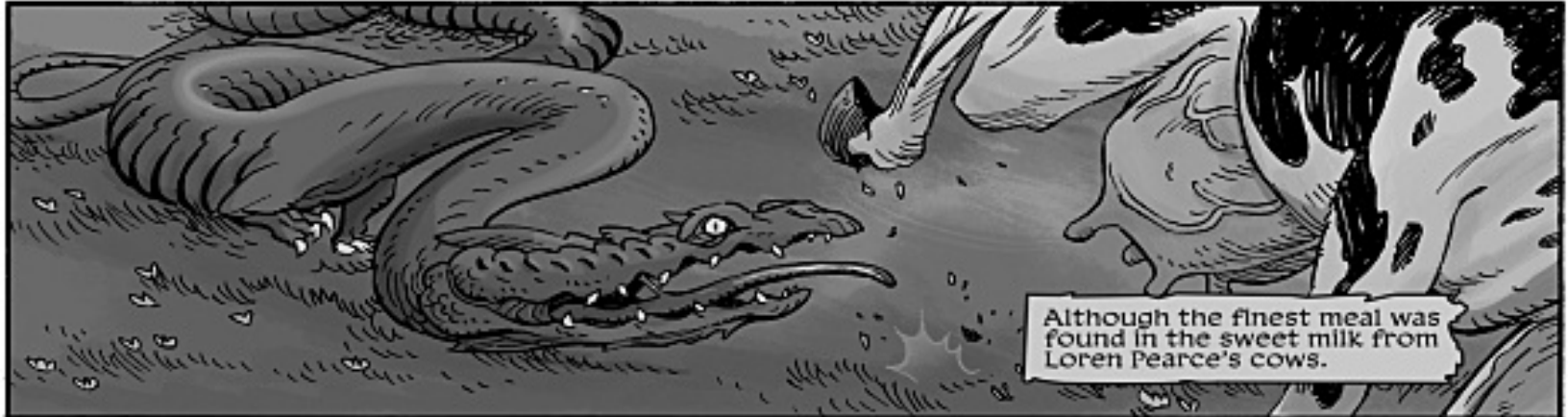


The Worm would not want for food in the lands around the North Country.

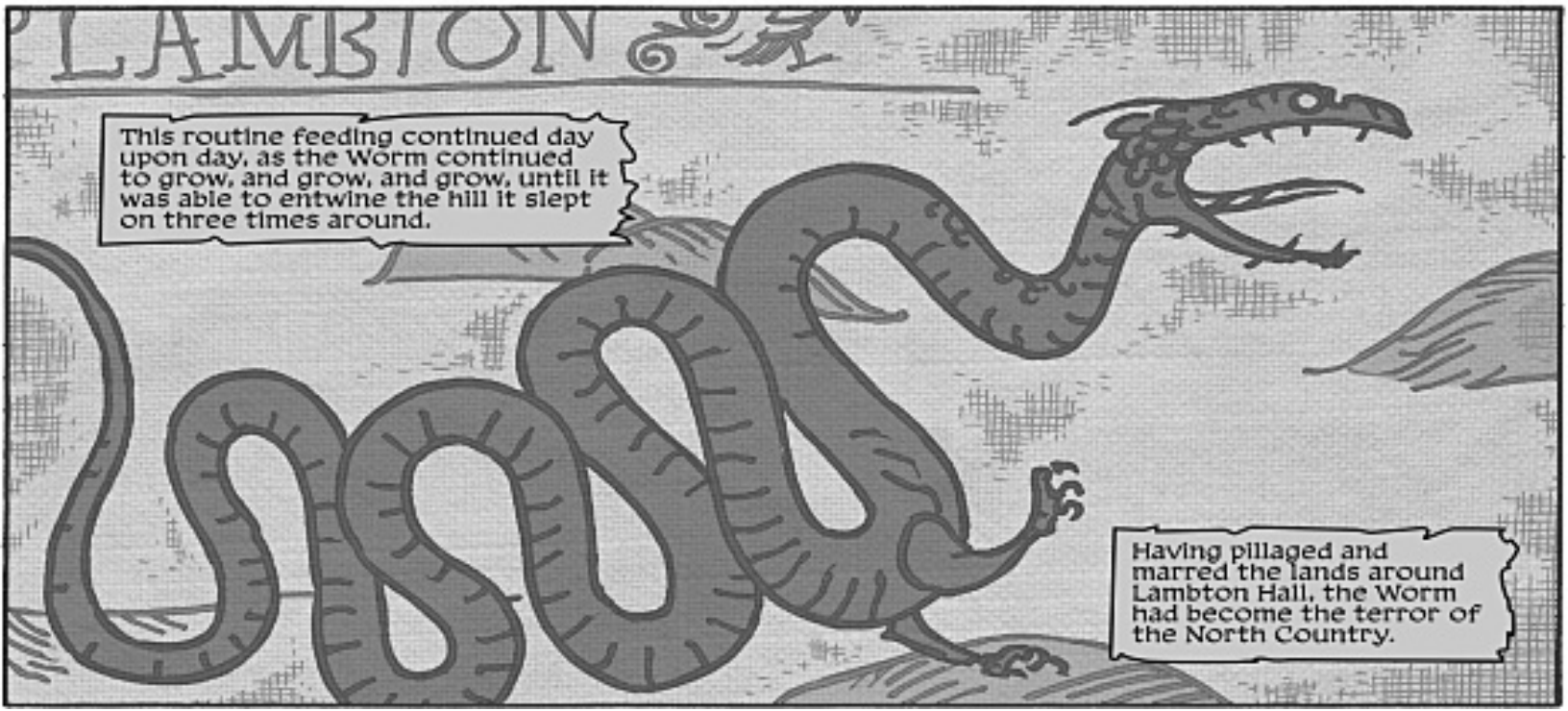
There were Geoffrey Turner's pigs--plump and full of vigor.



David Gilbert's lambs gave the Worm quite the sporting chase up and down the dewy pastures.



Although the finest meal was found in the sweet milk from Loren Pearce's cows.



This routine feeding continued day upon day, as the Worm continued to grow, and grow, and grow, until it was able to entwine the hill it slept on three times around.

Having pillaged and marred the lands around Lambton Hall, the Worm had become the terror of the North Country.

One day, however, the Worm set its sights on Lambton Hall and its venerable lord.



When the Lord heard the news of the Worm crossing the river he assembled the household.

MY FAITHFUL SERVANTS. THE BEAST OF THE NORTH COUNTRY IS NOW UPON US.

OH, NO!

THE RUMORS ARE TRUE?

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

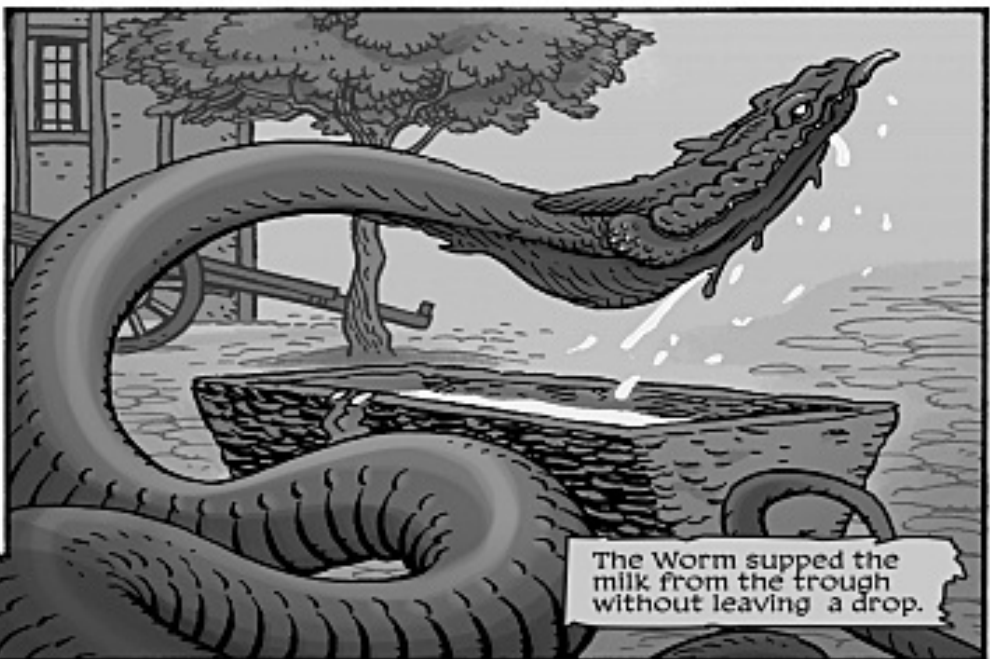
MAY I SUGGEST TO YOUR LORDSHIP THAT WE OFFER IT A TRIBUTE?

TALES OF ITS DESIRE FOR MILK ARE KNOWN IN THE NORTH COUNTRY.

WE COULD FILL THE WATERING TROUGH WITH MILK TO SLAKE THE THIRST OF THE WORM?



Without delay the steward was given charge to fill the stone trough in the courtyard with milk.



The Worm supped the milk from the trough without leaving a drop.

Each day, the trough was filled and again the Worm sup-sup-supped the milk and returned to the countryside, leaving Lambton Hall unscathed.



MY LORDSHIP,
THE BEAST IS
DRINKING THE MILK
OF NINE COWS DAILY.
AT THIS PACE, WE
SHALL NOT SATISFY
ITS THIRST.



OH, SO SORRY,
THAT PART OF THE
STORY WAS MAKING
ME TERRIBLY
THIRSTY.



MMM...
MILK.



BE THANKFUL I
AM NOT A CAT. AS I
WOULD BE IN YOUR LAP
BY NOW MAKING YOU
SHARE THAT GLASS.
PLEASE, CONTINUE
YOUR STORY.



HM, TOO TRUE.
NOW WHERE WAS I?
AH! SO THE LORD OF
LAMBTON WAS IN
QUITE A BIND, MY
FURRY FELLOW.



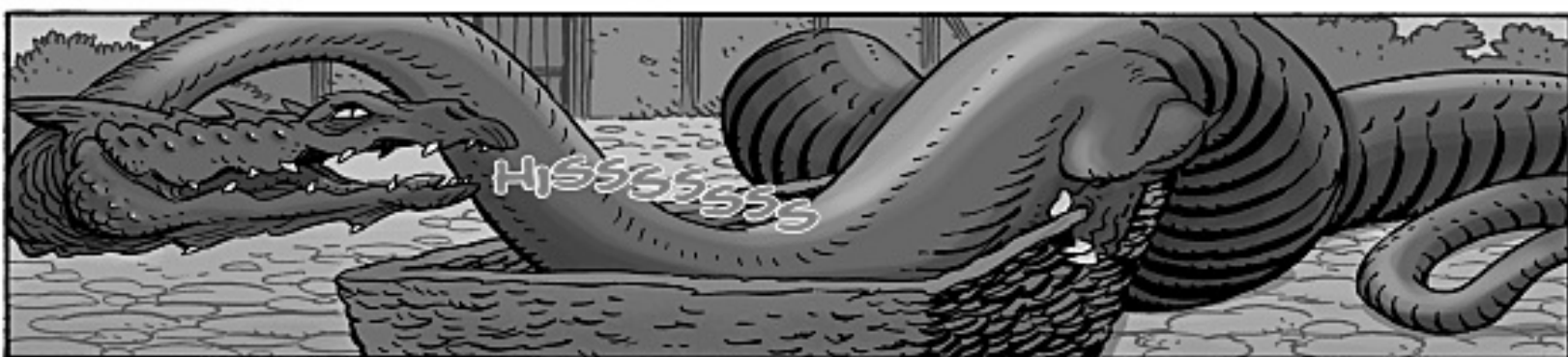
Upon the third day, the trough was sadly empty and so they prayed.



IT HAS COME.



THAT SERPENT
MUST BE AS
LONG AS THE
RIVER WEAR
ITSELF!



The worm was so
enraged at the empty
trough, it lashed out
with a fury.



In the wild eyes of the beast, our
Lord saw his fate if he would do
nothing more to stop it.



Lord Lambton of Durham swiftly sent out messengers on horseback--North past the River Tyne, West into the Cumbrians and South to Urra Moor.



Many a vallant knight answered the call to battle the Worm--this terror of the North Country.



And many a knight fell in defeat to the Worm's unique defensive ability.

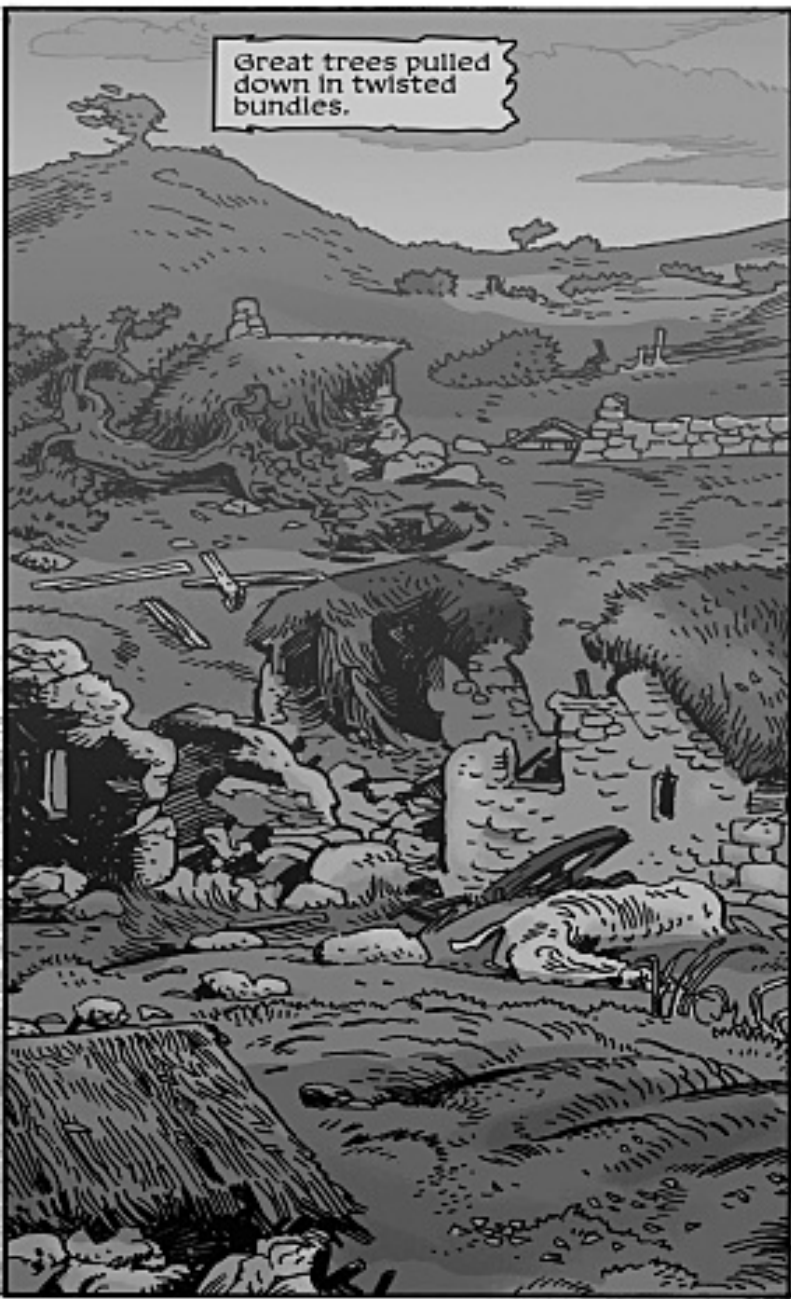
No matter how deep or vigorous the blows about its body, the severed parts could reunite and become whole once again.

So the lives of many a heroic soul were thrown at this terror like cups of water upon a raging fire--all to no great purpose.

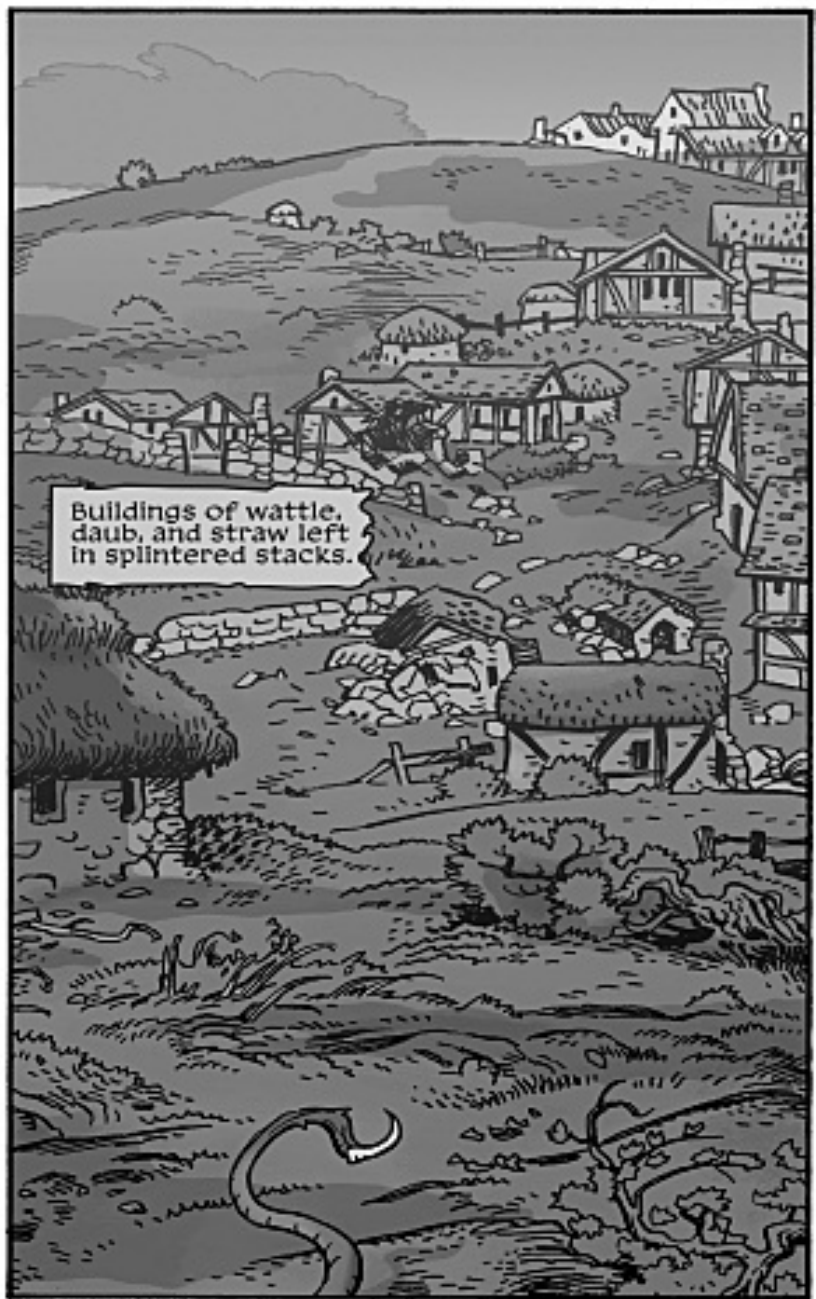




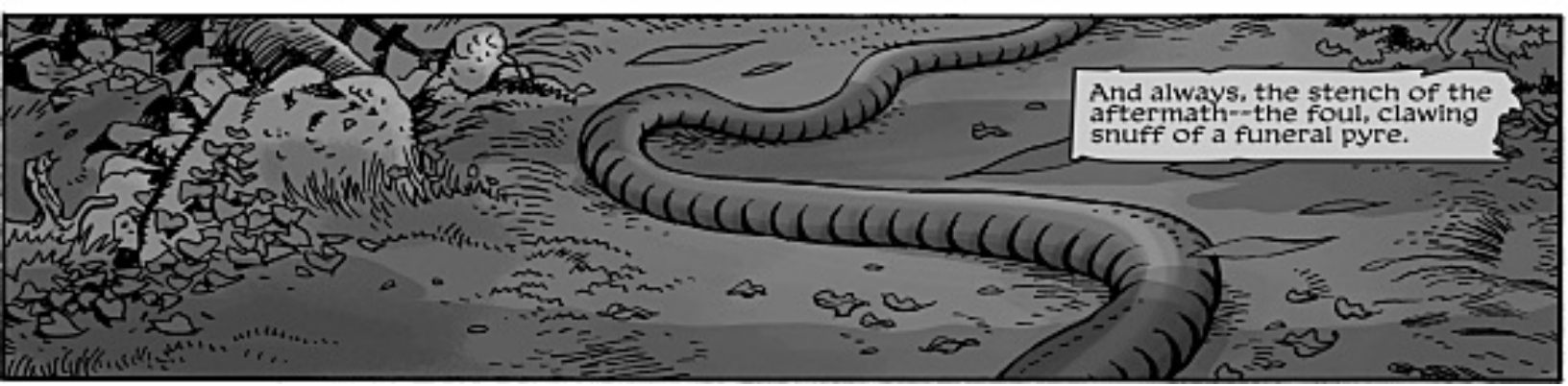
Beyond the great loss of life,
the Worm had spoiled the fertile
lands of the North Country.



Great trees pulled
down in twisted
bundles.



Buildings of wattle,
daub, and straw left
in splintered stacks.



And always, the stench of the
aftermath--the foul, clawing
snuff of a funeral pyre.



On this day, the sun cast the shadow of a man, not a boy, upon this troubled land.

After seven long years, John Lambton, now a Knight of Rhodes, had returned home.



He returned to the proud home of his ancestors to find it in ruin, waste, and desolation.



He returned to see his people subjugated to the will of the Worm.



He returned to find his now gaunt father, Lord Edward Lambton, anxious, overcome, and fading into the grave.



I SHALL SEEK
THE COUNCIL OF AN
ORACLE. I PRAY SHE
WILL GIVE ME ADVICE
TO DEFEAT THIS
FOUL WORM.



MASTER, IF I
MAY? I KNOW OF
SUCH AN ORACLE.
ONLY A HALF-DAY
RIDE FROM HERE.



John swiftly left
Lambton Hall with the
Lord's steward in tow
as retainer and guide.



Further, further, further
into the wilderness along
a maze of roads and trails
and footpaths.



Until they reached
the cottage of the
woman they sought.





Inside, the scents of Amber, Foxglove, and Belladonna hung in the air, as the young lord began to speak...



I AM JOHN, KNIGHT OF RHODES AND HEIR TO THE LORDSHIP OF LAMBTON. I SEEK COUNCIL AND ADVICE IN MATTERS OF GRAVE IMPORTANCE.



She looked him over with a wide gaze and crooked tilt of the head as she fingered a necklace of bead and bone.

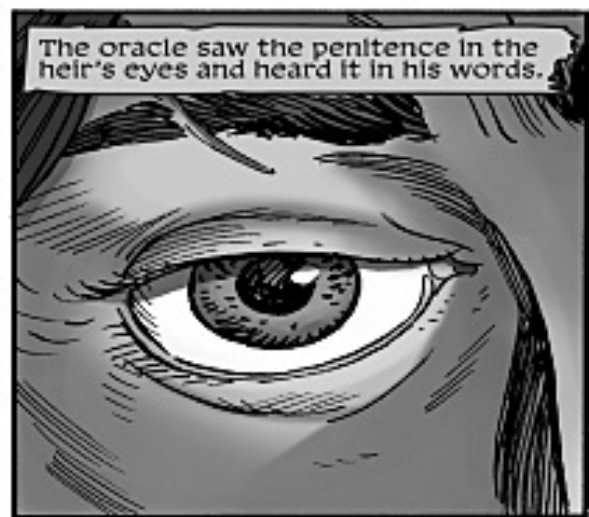
THE
WORM?



Y-YES. I HAVE, IN WHAT SEEMS ANOTHER LIFETIME, BROUGHT RUIN UPON THIS LAND. MANY YEARS AGO I FISHED ON THE SABBATH AND CAUGHT THE WORM, THIS TERROR OF THE NORTH COUNTRY. THOUGH, I NEVER WISHED SUCH MISERY FOR MY FATHER EDWARD, OR FOR MY PEOPLE.



YOUR HATE, YOUR DISRESPECT, YOUR PROFANE ACTIONS--ALL CORRUPT, ALL BROUGHT RUIN AND ROT! YOU CALLED IT OUT OF THE DEPTHS-- IT HEARD YOUR SONG.





BEFORE YOU
ENCOUNTER THIS VILLAIN
YOU MUST TAKE A VOW; A
SACRIFICIAL VOW FOR THIS
FORESIGHT. THAT IF YOU ARE
SUCCESSFUL, YOU SHALL
KILL THE FIRST LIVING THING
THAT IS MET ON YOUR WAY
HOMeward.



AYE! THANK
YOU. IT SHALL
BE DONE,
MISTRESS.



HOLD! FOR
THAT IS NOT THE
ONLY LIMB OF
THIS TASK.

IF YOU FAIL IN
FULFILLING THIS VOW,
FOR NINE GENERATIONS,
NO LAMBTON MEN SHALL
DIE IN THEIR BEDS.
OLD-AGE WILL NOT BE
THEIR FROLIC.



UNDERSTOOD.



John and the steward returned to
Lambton Hall and set upon fulfilling
the advice of the oracle.



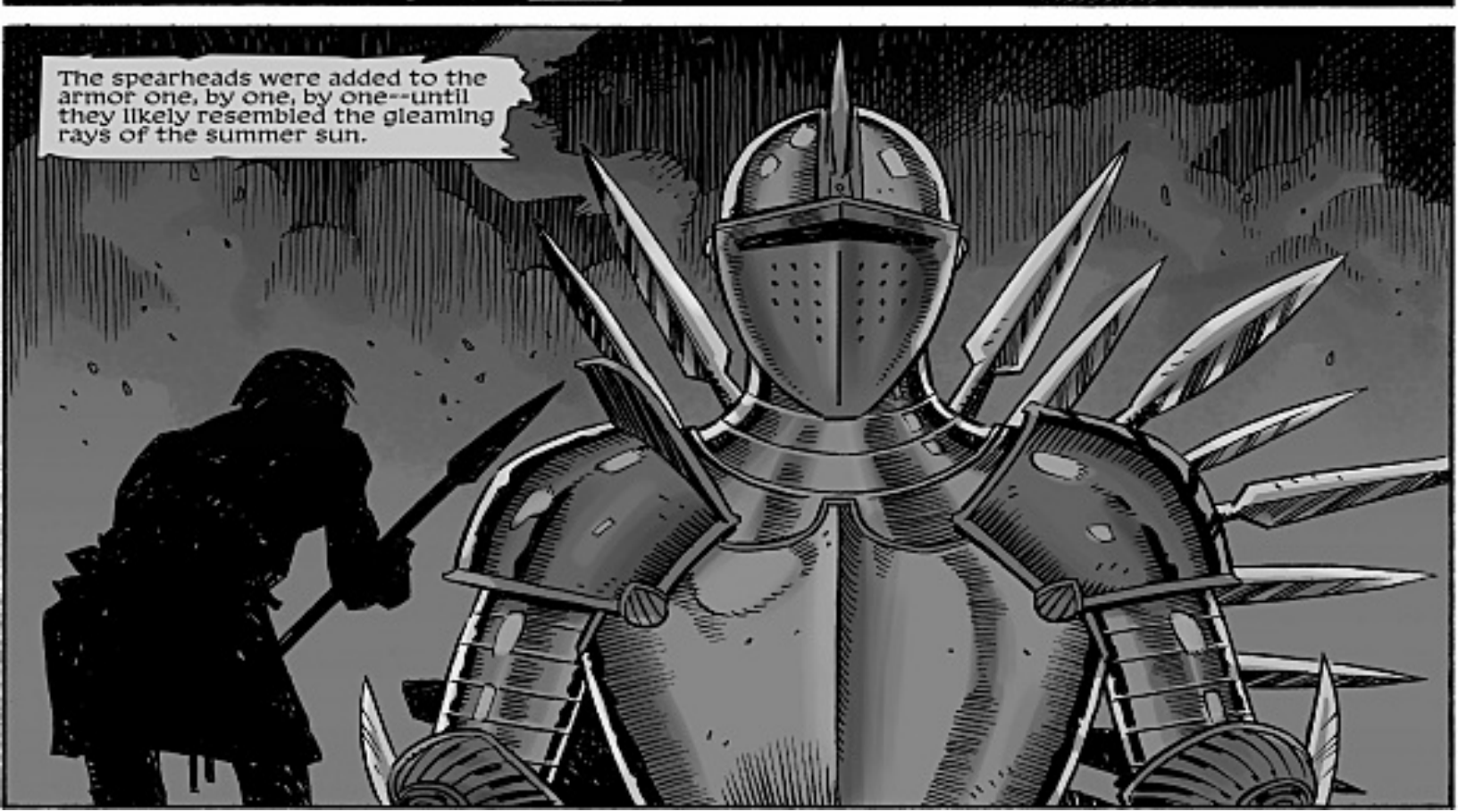
The blacksmith's furious
blows rang out and broke
the silence of morning.



The hiss of molten
metal floated alight
as smoke through the
windway.

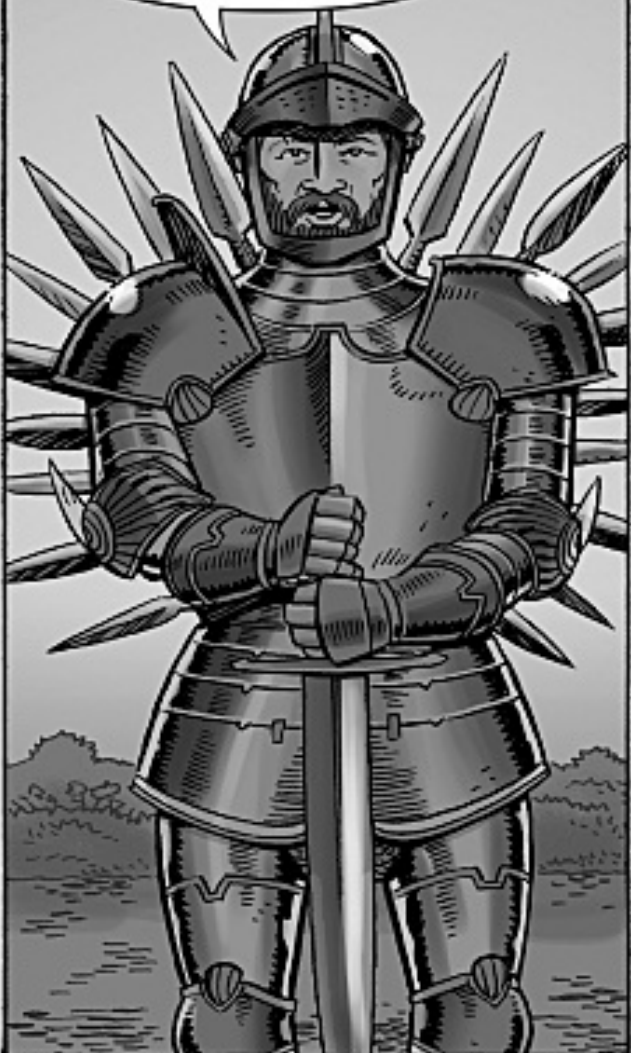


The spearheads were added to the
armor one, by one, by one--until
they likely resembled the gleaming
rays of the summer sun.

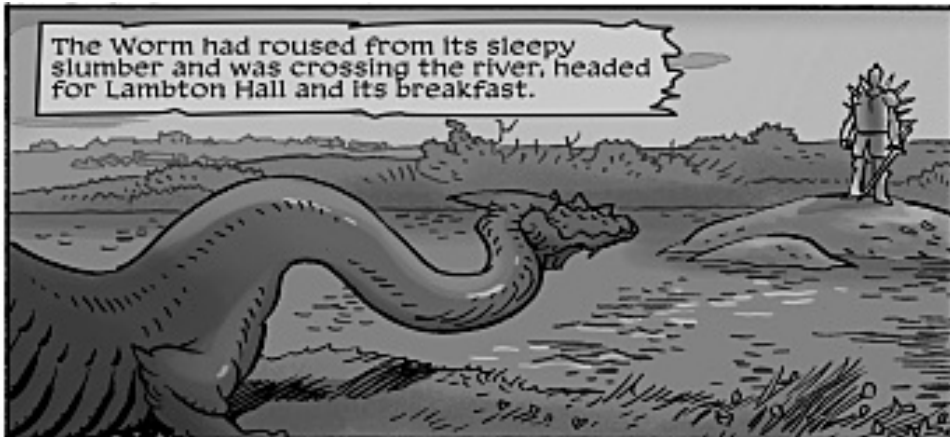


Wading into the river, John made his way to the rocks and waited for the Worm as he uttered his vow.

FOR MY TRIUMPH IN BATTLE THIS DAY, I PLEDGE TO TAKE THE SACRED LIFE OF THE FIRST LIVING THING MY EYES MEET ON MY RETURN TO LAMBTON HALL.



The Worm had roused from its sleepy slumber and was crossing the river, headed for Lambton Hall and its breakfast.



The Worm was lost in pangs of hunger until John's blade struck its head.



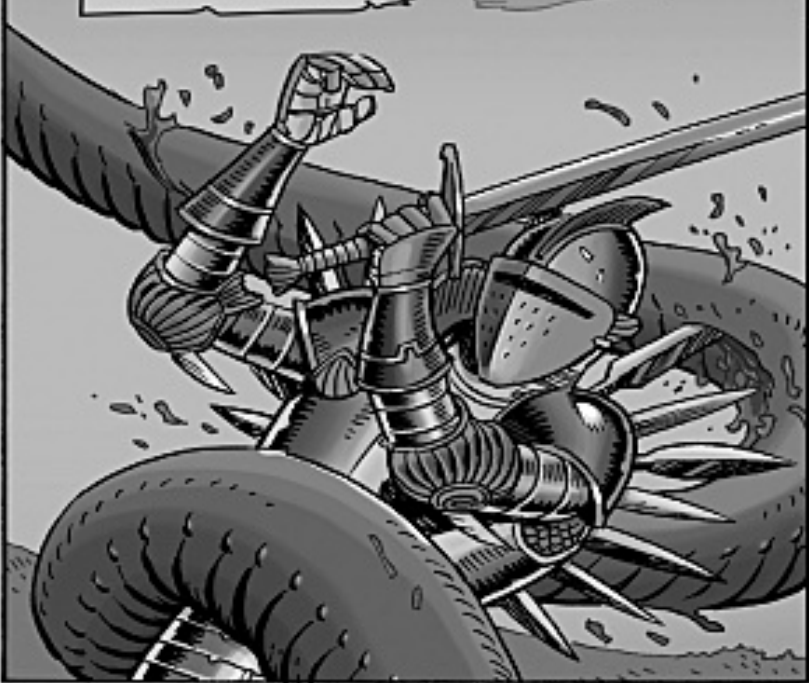
Regaining his footing, John hacked at its body making quick cuts with his sword that just as quickly healed.



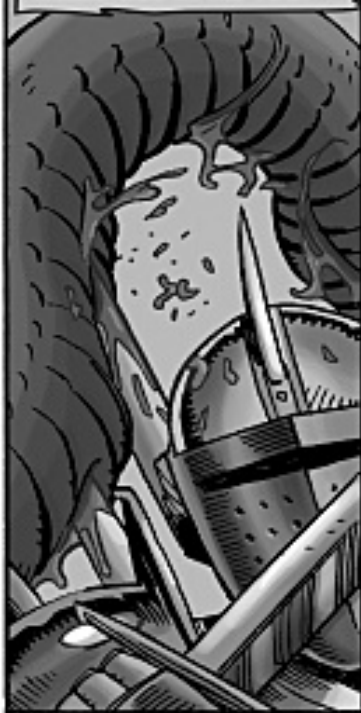
The Worm spun around, rolling with anger at John's urging.



John realized the value of the oracle's advice. The tighter the Worm wrapped him in its folds, the more the spear heads cut, cut, cut.



Bracing himself under the weight of the twisting coils and fending away glancing attempts from its toothy maw, he patiently awaited a moment of weakness in his foe.



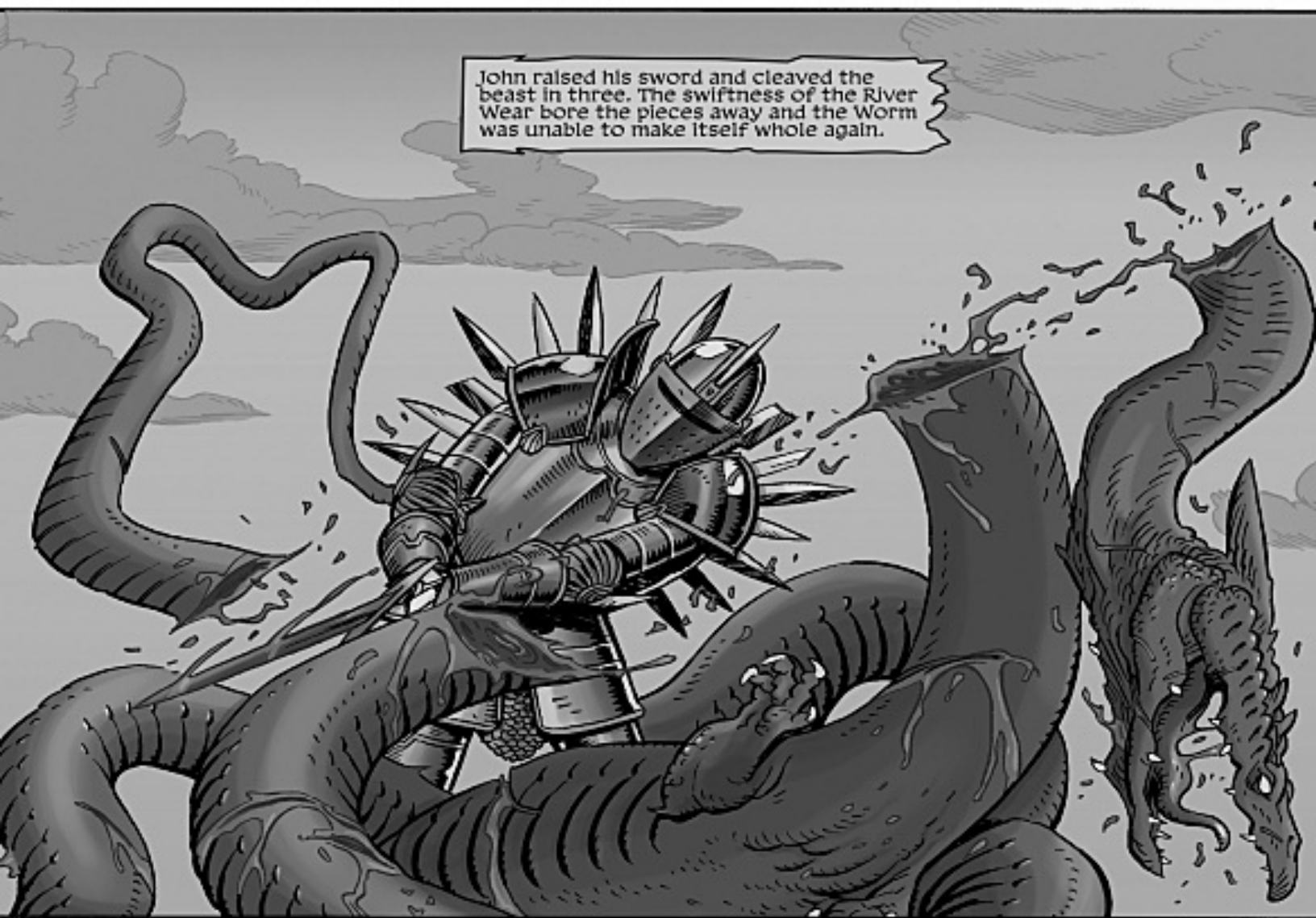
Until at last the river was flush with crimson gore.



The carnage was too much for the Worm, its strength ebbing into the river current--th-thump, th-thump, th-thump.



John raised his sword and cleaved the beast in three. The swiftness of the River Wear bore the pieces away and the Worm was unable to make itself whole again.



The terror of the North Country was destroyed.

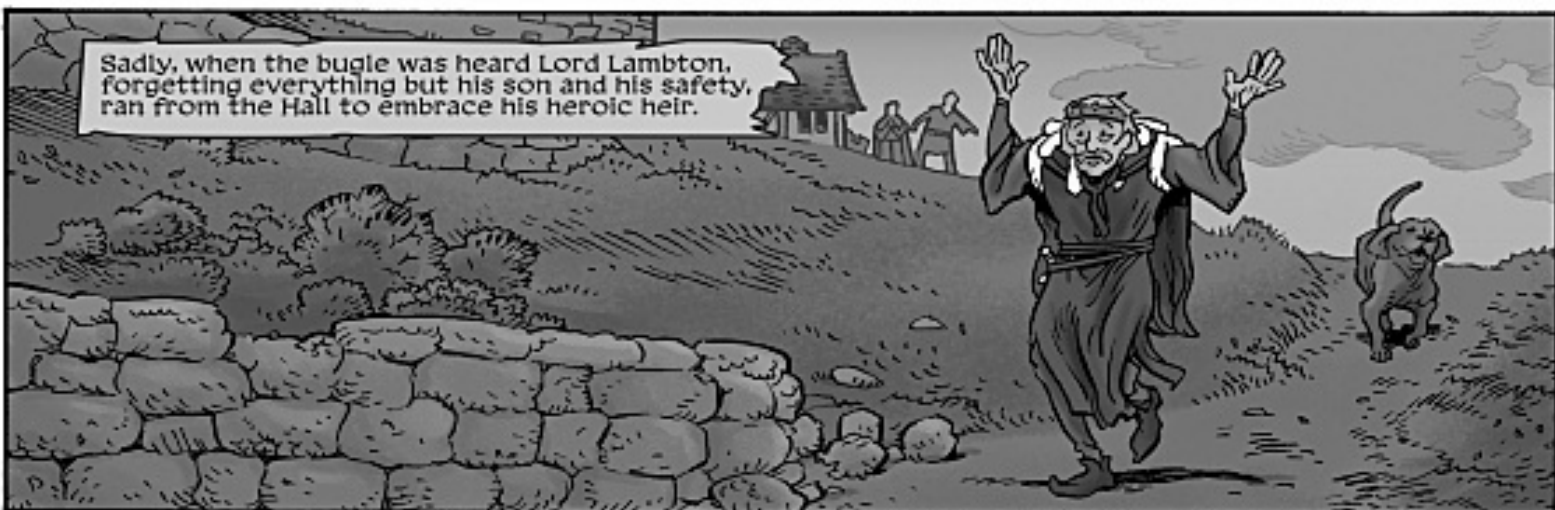


During this desperate conflict the households of Lambton had shuttered themselves inside. They were anxiously awaiting a trumpet call that would signal John, the conqueror on this fateful day.

This signal would assure Lord Lambton of John's safety as well as for his steward to release the hunting hound that would serve as the required sacrifice to the oracle and the vow he made.



Sadly, when the bugle was heard Lord Lambton, forgetting everything but his son and his safety, ran from the Hall to embrace his heroic heir.



John was dumbfounded as he watched his father scamper down the lane with the hunting hound close behind.

FATHER?!

I CANNOT KILL MY FATHER TO APPEASE THIS VOW.



John, Knight of Rhodes and heir to the lordship of Lambton, slumped to his knees in defeat. Praying that this curse the oracle foretold had been just folly to rouse his spirit for battle.





Well, sadly for John, the vow had been broken. The oracle's prediction fulfilled and the Lampton men, for nine generations, all died at youthful and vital ages.



YOU HAD ME WORRIED ABOUT THE HOUND.

AH! YOU MUST THINK ME A RIGHT CRUEL MAN, MY FRIEND.



WELL, NOT IN THIS STORY, AT LEAST.

THE END

TALE THREE COVER
HANNAH CHRISTENSON





LBINA

In the beginning, I presented my editor with several different script outlines, all with a common background environment: East Slavic folklore. A few years ago, I did an illustration about Baba Yaga and while doing research for that illustration, I came to appreciate not only traditional clothing, patterns, and architecture from Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, but also other folktales and legends from the area. The initial script outlines I wrote didn't quite fit, so my editor and I went in a different direction, with another legend: the tales of Aliosha Popovich. "Aliosha Popovich" is a story from an oral narrative poem, an epic. A kernel of the story is based in truth, but is then surrounded by hyperbole and fantasy. Aliosha was a powerful and fierce bogatyr, a sort of knight, and also son of a priest. He was known for being sly, crafty, strong, and for being a liar. He would often use mockery and tricks to defeat his foes. In the original story, he and his traveling companion, Maryshko Paronov, go in search of a lord to serve. They also find Tugarin, a dragon with wings made of paper.

My story follows the events in the folktale fairly closely, but the main deviations are that Alyosha and Maryshko are now both women, renamed Albina and Mara. There are several different tellings of the legends of Popovich and Paronov, and each story seems to focus on a different character attribute. Popovich's strength or skill, Paronov's loyalty, the dragon Tugarin's shapeshifting or origin. My goal was that, despite the change to Albina Popovich's and Mara Paronov's gender, the spirit of the characters would remain the same.

- Hannah Christenson



IN ANOTHER TIME, THERE WAS A POWERFUL WARRIOR BORN TO A SOUND OF THUNDER SO GREAT, IT COULD SHAKE THIS HOUSE TO THE GROUND.

SOME HAVE SAID THAT SHE WAS BORN IN A VALLEY AS THUNDERBOLT STRICKEN MOUNTAINS CRUMBLLED AROUND HER. OTHERS SWEAR SHE WAS BORN IN HER FATHER'S CATHEDRAL, SAFE FROM A SQUALL SO TERRIBLE THAT ONLY THE CATHEDRAL STOOD AMONGST THE RUBBLE THE NEXT MORNING.

She was taller and stronger than other children her age. She never quite found her equal, and was never quite satisfied when she won the games children play.

She was swifter and more cunning than her peers, and she sought after those things that require such abilities.

She could not resist the call to arms, and soon became a frightening sight on the field of battle.

Regardless of how she was born, Albina Popovich was a different child all together.

After one such battle, she returned home to her mother and her father, priests who lived in a holy house of worship.



Albina Popovich told her mother and father about the many battles she had faced...

...of men and demons she had conquered...



...and the lands she had seen.



She was indeed thrilled to be home again.

She rested for a time.



But Albina soon began to long for the weight of a sword in her hand and the sound of thundering hooves across the field.



MOTHER AND FATHER, I COME FOR YOUR BLESSING. I WISH TO SEEK OUT A LORD TO GIVE MY SERVICE TO. I CAN HARDLY STAND THE SILENCE IN MY EARS SINCE MY RETURN, I CAN'T BEAR HOW LIGHT I FEEL WITHOUT MY ARMOR, AND I CAN NO LONGER ABIDE THIS STILLNESS.

I MUST LEAVE AT ONCE.



I SEE YOU ARE DESPERATE TO RIDE OUT AGAIN AND I SEE THAT NO MAN OR BEAST CAN BAR YOUR WAY. GO SAFELY, DAUGHTER, AND COME HOME AGAIN.

WHEN WILL YOU RETURN TO ME? SHALL I SEE YOUR FACE AGAIN IN THIS LIFE? WHO WILL GUARD YOU AND CARRY YOUR BURDENS? DAUGHTER OF MINE, IF YOU MUST GO AND FACE MAN AND DEMON ALIKE ONCE MORE, THEN FOR MY SAKE, DO NOT GO INTO BATTLE ALONE.

IN THIS TEMPLE THERE IS THE DAUGHTER OF ONE WE TRUST. TAKE MARA PARANOV ALONG WITH YOU, SO THAT YOU MAY NEVER FACE YOUR FOES ALONE.



MOTHER, I AM ABLE TO CARRY MY BURDENS WITHOUT SOMEONE TO CUMBER ME.



NOT ALL BURDENS CAN BE CARRIED ON SHOULDERS, ALBINA.



THE HEAVIEST WEIGHT IS OFTEN UNSEEN.



MARA! PLEASE COME AND MEET MY DAUGHTER.

And there Albina met Mara, as dust motes drifted through the light of a church window.



FAREWELL,
MOTHER AND
FATHER.



BE SURE TO COMB HIS MANE
AND POLISH HIS BUCKLES,
THERE ISN'T MUCH ELSE YOU
COULD DO TO HELP.



I WASN'T
CHARGED WITH
POLISHING
TACK.



LET'S BE
OFF.



Albina and Mara mounted their good steeds
in the light of the next morning, and with
boldness in one heart and resolution in the
other, they set on their way.





The bogatyr, a fierce knight, and her servant braved the wilderness to reach his lands.



WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT BUSINESS
HAVE YOU
WITH PRINCE
VLADIMIR?



I AM ALBINA
POPOVICH, DAUGHTER
OF THE OLD PRIEST OF THE
CATHEDRAL. I OFFER MY
SERVICE TO A NEW LORD, AS
DOES MY SERVANT, MARA
PARANOV.

YOU ARE *THE* ALBINA
POPOVICH, THE ONE WHO
RIDES AT THE FRONT AND IS
FIRST INTO THE FIGHT? YOU
ARE AS TALL AS THEY SAY! I
WILL SEND WORD TO PRINCE
VLADIMIR IMMEDIATELY.



The guard sent word and soon, Albina and her servant were welcomed to a feast with the prince.



Neither the bogatyr nor her servant had ever seen a palace equal to the one they stood in now. Albina had never laid eyes on such delicately carved stone. The grandest house she had ever seen had been her father's wooden cathedral.



They reached the feast hall where they met Prince Vladimir and his wife. The prince greeted her and her servant, and asked from where she came. And Albina said again--



I AM ALBINA
POPOVICH, DAUGHTER
OF THE OLD
PRIEST OF THE
CATHEDRAL.

I OFFER MY
SERVICE TO YOU,
PRINCE VLADIMIR OF
KIEV, AS DOES MY
SERVANT MARA
PARANOV.



Prince Vladimir and his wife welcomed them, as word of Albina's deeds had reached their ears. The prince accepted her offer.

The prince provided Albina a place of honor and pride at his table, but--



--Albina chose to sit near the stove, the lowliest seat in the hall.



WHY DO YOU SIT IN--

TUGARIN!
I SEE HIM--
TUGARIN!



A great shadow fell over the city.



Screams announced the Terrible One, the Son of the Worm.



The dragon Tugarin.





CRACK!

Tugarin the dragon burst through the doors and filled the entire hall with his tail swinging, his three heads hissing, and his wings stretching to the rafters above.

But despite his snarls and spitting, Albina Popovich remained seated by the stove.





Tugarin's three heads snarled and bit the air.



They squished painfully into one.



His clawed toes curled and uncurled, and his skin shed.



Standing before them now was a man where a beast once was.



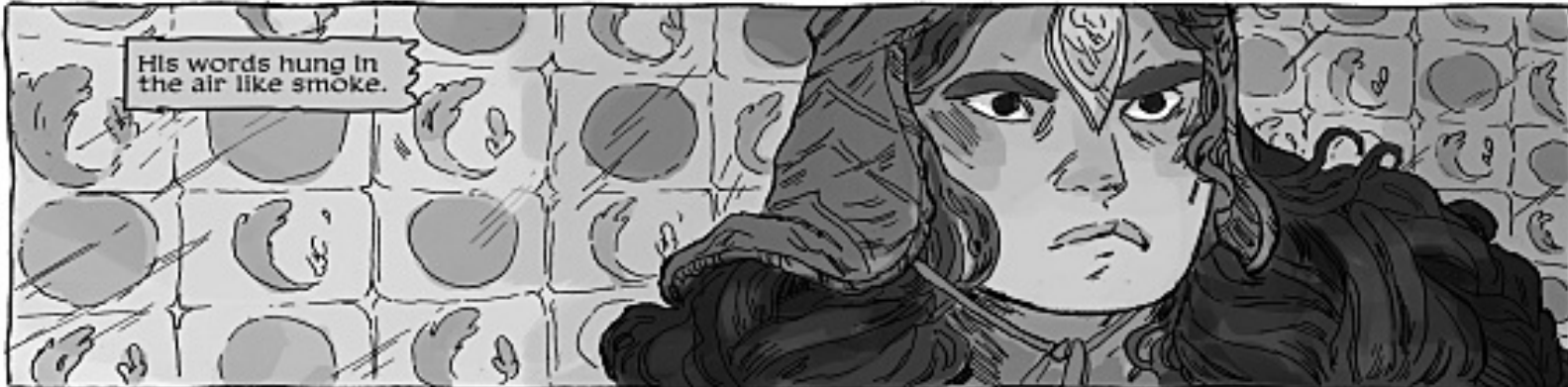
Tugarin began to feast from the table at which he was most unwelcome.



He acted in a nasty manner, casting insults at the prince and his wife as quickly and easily as he cast gnawed bones or a fish pie he took a disliking to.



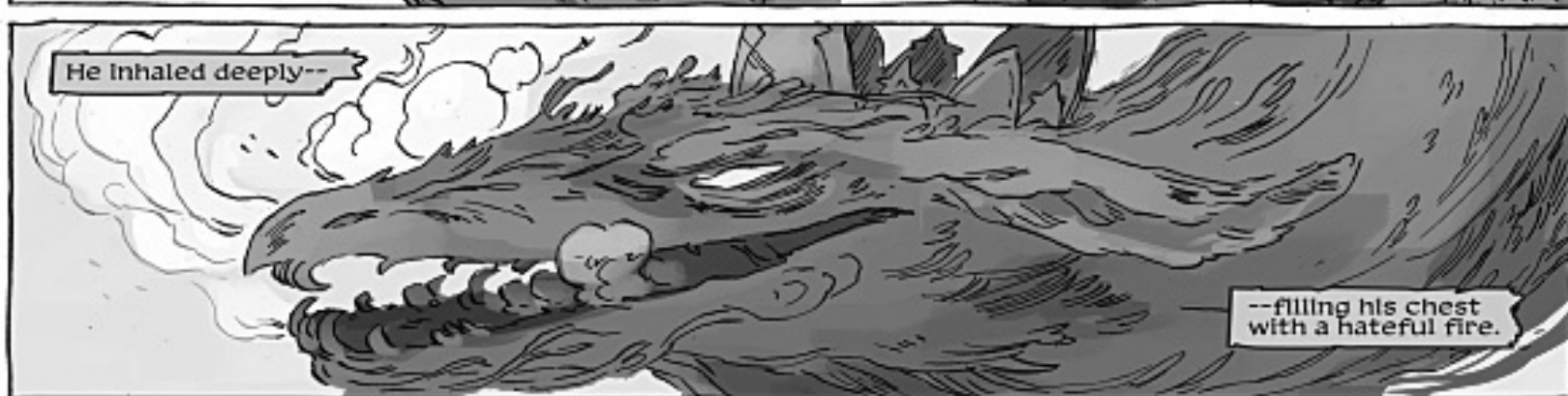
The Son of the Worm boasted of his power and greatness while he swept through the room.



His words hung in the air like smoke.









Tugarin
clutched his
ruined face...



...and took flight as
quickly as he had
arrived, vowing that
they would meet again.



HE'S GONE! I WOULD HAVE HAD HIM IF I'D HAD HIS SPIKE. GIVE IT TO ME AND WHEN NEXT I SEE HIM, HE WILL NOT FLY AGAIN!

NO, I'LL KEEP IT AT MY SIDE. I'LL BE THE ONE HE COMES FOR.

The next day, Mara awoke early to feed and water the horses.

LITTLE SERVANT.

COME OUT! I KNOW YOUR VOICE, TUGARIN!

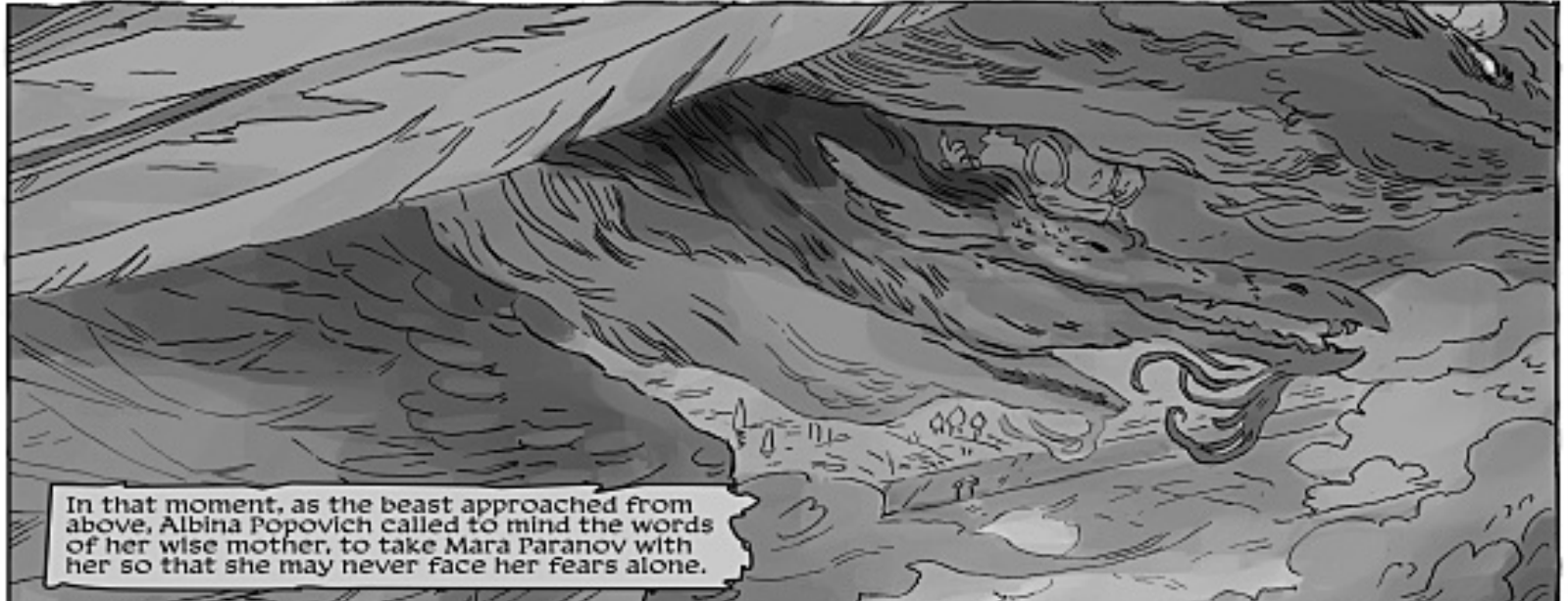
DO NOT SPEAK TO ME.

TELL THAT CORPULENT WOMAN TO COME TO THE OPEN FIELD TOMORROW IF SHE IS SO EAGER TO CLEAN MY TEETH WITH HER BONES.

I'LL FIGHT YOU MYSELF, WORM. YOU WILL BE THE SUPPER OF RAVENS AND RATS IN THE STREET!

ONE WHO BUCKLES THE BOOTSTRAPS AND ADJUSTS THE TASSELS HANGING FROM A PORCINE BOGATYR IS IN NO PLACE TO CHALLENGE ME.





In that moment, as the beast approached from above, Albina Popovich called to mind the words of her wise mother, to take Mara Paranov with her so that she may never face her fears alone.



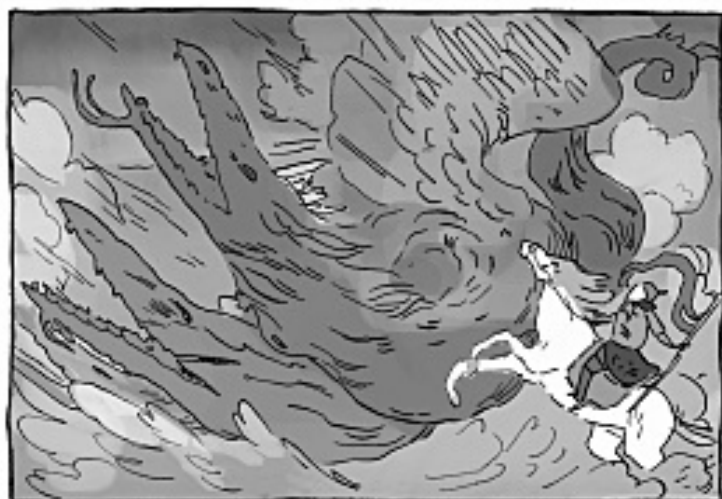
HOLY MOTHER OF GOD, LET THIS PASSING STORM STAY FOR A MOMENT. STAY AND TWIST AND PITCH AND SEND TUGARIN TO THE GROUND!



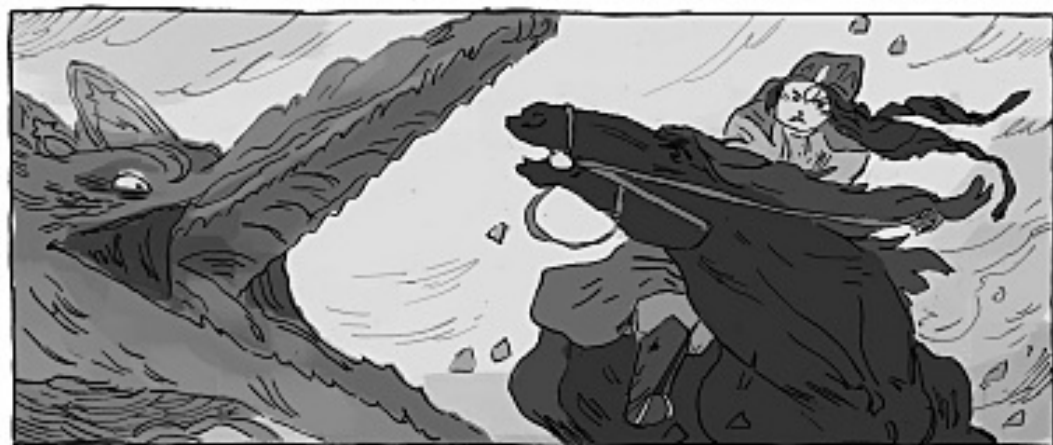
SEND US THE LIFE-GIVING RAIN, THAT IT MIGHT WET TUGARIN'S WINGS, THAT WE MIGHT MEET HIM FOOT AGAINST FOOT!

The sound of Tugarin's wings was like the wind howling, like thunderclaps above, like branches snapping in the gale.

But Albina's prayers were answered, and the thunder struck the first blow against the beast.



And so they met.



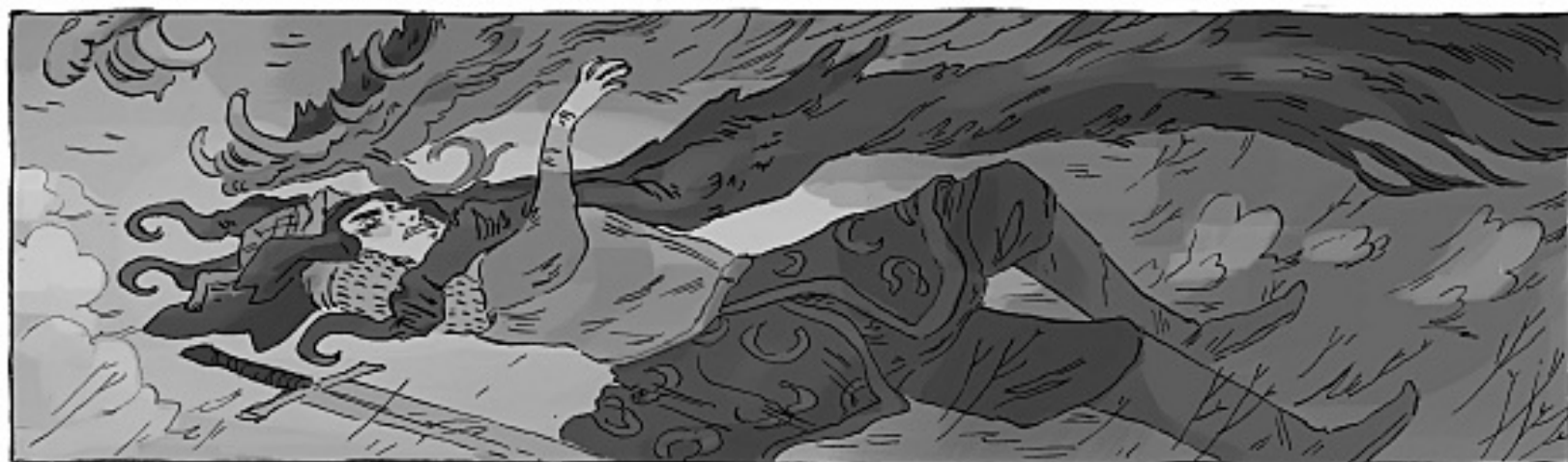
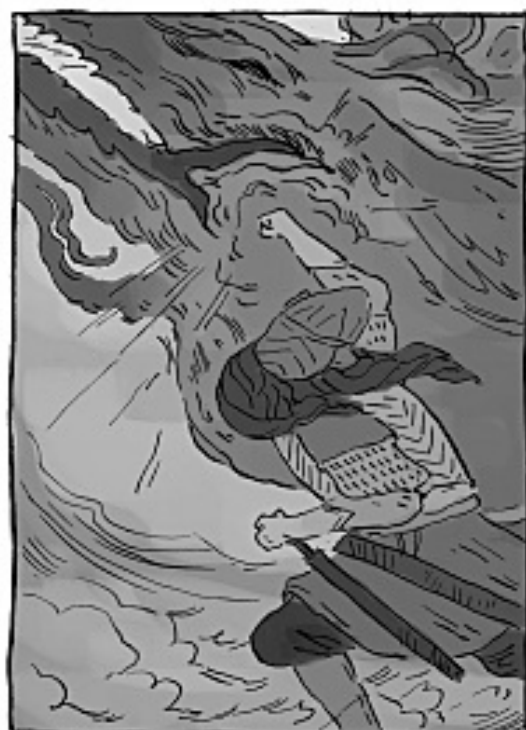




Albina's companion had wounded their enemy, and she moved to finish the task.



Tugarin was ruthless and desperate...



But Albina brandished the gift he'd lost to her...



And kept her promise.

When the great storm had passed, so too had Tugarin.



Albina, the warrior born of wet and noise, and Mara, the bogatyr's servant, sat there together for a moment.



And the next moment they found their feet again.



THIS STORM WILL SOON PASS, AND ANOTHER WILL TAKE ITS PLACE. SO IT WILL GO FOR A LONG WHILE INDEED.



BUT LIKE ALBINA AND HER COMPANION, WHAT MATTERS IS THAT WE CAN FACE THE STORM TOGETHER.



THE END





AMURAI'S SACRIFICE

The concept of sacrifice, placing someone else's well being above our own, was the core idea that spawned this adaptation of the Japanese legend of Yofune-Nushi. Everything was already there, from the daughter who willingly risked it all to find her father to the girls forced as offerings to a sea monster in order to save their villages. It was just a matter of finding a new voice to tell the classic story.

For me, the beauty of *Jim Henson's The Storyteller* has always been that, no matter the origin of the story, the journey of the hero felt close and personal. It could've been a trapped princess or a homeless wanderer, their conflicts and their struggles—as well as their ability to overcome them—resonated with everyone's inner struggle in one way or another. It showed the universality of storytelling.

With both of these premises in mind, I wanted to take Tokoyo's story into an exploration of the reasoning and motivations for sacrifice, the lengths some are willing to take in order to secure someone else's happiness, and the inner conflict that may come from it. For this, I took the character of Yofune-Nushi, the great dragon, as more than just a beast to be slayed but as the ultimate temptation that our hero must face, both internally and externally, in her quest. He is the voice inside all of us that pushes us towards the easier path at the expense of others.

- *Torge Crona*



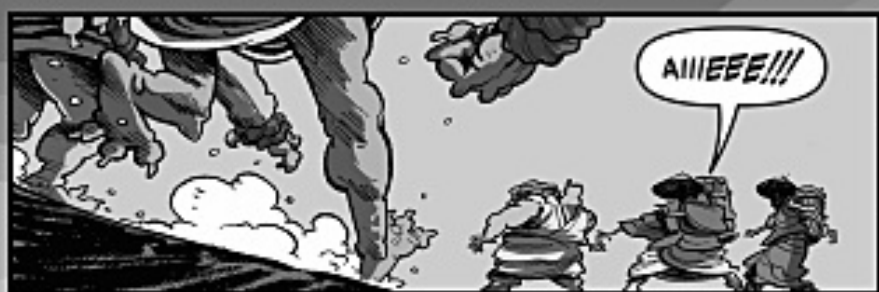
Silly old dog! What is life if not the adventure of one story after the other? Take this one, for example.

Once, a long time ago, off the shore of a very prosperous land, there was an accursed place known as the *Oki Islands*.



A nasty place, really. Filled with monsters and demons. Oh, yes! Poor were the souls that lived in such a terrible land.

There, one wrong turn could mean death...or worse.



There was no hope left in the hearts of its inhabitants.



Until one day, a rumor spread.

A rumor of a young warrior, a heroine named *Tokoyo*, who had come to save their land from the creatures that lurked among them.

GRRR?

WALSH!

Besides her skill with the sword, little was known about the mysterious girl.

She was recognized only by her *armor*, worn by the army of the neighboring mainland.

In gratitude, the locals would thank not the girl, but her master, *Lord Hojo Takatoki*, for sending help to their impoverished island.

And, boy, was that the wrong thing to do! For just the mention of the Lord's name boiled the blood of our young warrior.

YOU CAN
THANK HOJO
FOR THAT.

RIP

SOME
HEROINE SHE
TURNED OUT
TO BE.

AH, BUT YOU SEE, A
HERO, A *TRUE* HERO,
IS NOT ONE THAT
BATTLES JUST THE
DEMONS AHEAD...

BUT, ALSO,
THOSE THAT
LIVE *WITHIN*.

Demons had brought
our heroine here.

You see, it was in searching and
not protecting, that Tokoyo
arrived on the Oki Islands.

Searching for her
banished father, the
warrior *Oribe Shima*.

A noble act, in fact! Yes, yes.
But *tainted*, much like the
islands, by darkness.

Hatred for *Lord
Hojo Takatoki*.

And perhaps, beneath
all that, hatred for
something more...

...FATHER...

TOKOYO,
WHEN IT COMES
TO THE ONES
YOU LOVE--

--THERE'S NO
SACRIFICE BIG
ENOUGH...

For deep inside her heart, the
seed of hatred grew. Hatred for
the man who had *condemned*
her father to the islands.



So the morning came that Tokoyo--woken by the sound of mysterious *prayers*--decided to follow two odd looking figures across the accursed forest.



Something didn't sit right with our warrior.

When the figures approached a most peculiar place by the edge of a cliff, Tokoyo knew her instincts were right.



NAMU AMIDA BUTSU.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!



UGHFF!



BETTER
CHOOSE YOUR
WORDS CAREFULLY,
FOR THEY COULD
EASILY BE YOUR
LAST.



FEAR NOT, YOUNG
SAMURAI, TO YOUR EYES
I MUST BE NOTHING
SHORT OF A *MONSTER*.
I UNDERSTAND, IN MANY
WAYS, IT IS EXACTLY
WHAT I'VE BECOME.

BUT THE REASON
FOR ALL THIS IS THE
MONSTER THAT LIES
THERE, DEEP WITHIN
THOSE DARK
WATERS.

WE COME FROM A
NEARBY VILLAGE. THIS ISLAND
IS CURSED BY THE CREATURE
YOFUNE-NUSHI. EVERY YEAR
THE STORY REPEATS ITSELF. I
TAKE NO PLEASURE IN WHAT
MUST BE DONE, BUT UNLESS
A LIFE IS OFFERED IN RITUAL
SACRIFICE, THE MONSTER'S
WRATH WILL FALL UPON
US ALL.



I DO NOT ASK
YOU TO UNDER-
STAND, BUT IF OUR
VILLAGE IS TO
SURVIVE, YOU NEED
TO STEP ASIDE.



COWARD!
YOU HIDE
BEHIND YOUR
WORDS--

CLINK



--BUT IF YOU
WISH TO HARM
THIS GIRL, YOU'LL
HAVE TO FACE
ME.

MAYBE
THEN YOU'LL
UNDERSTAND THAT
TO SURVIVE, WHAT
YOU NEED IS TO
FIGHT, NOT--



STOP!

FIGHT?! WE
ARE ALL OUT
OF FIGHT, AND
STRUGGLE IS ALL
WE HAVE LEFT.

OURS IS A
POOR VILLAGE MADE
UP OF FISHERMEN, NOT
WARRIORS. WHAT ARE
WE TO DO AGAINST A
MONSTER THAT CAN
CONJURE STORMS?!

NO, OUR FIGHT IS NOT
BY THE EDGE OF A SWORD
BUT BY THE SWEAT ON OUR
FOREHEADS, THE PAIN IN OUR
BACKS. HERE, SACRIFICE
MEANS *MORE* THAN JUMPING
OFF A CLIFF, SACRIFICE
MEANS GIVING IT ALL FOR
THE FUTURE OF OUR
VILLAGE.



IF, WITH MY
LIFE, I CAN ENSURE
THE SAFETY OF THE
ONES I LOVE, THEN
THERE'S NO SACRIFICE
BIG ENOUGH!



WHAT AN AMAZING
POWER WORDS CAN
HOLD. AND IF YOU HAD
BEEN THERE YOU COULD
HAVE SEEN THESE
WORDS STRIKING
SHARPER THAN ANY
SWORD.

WORDS?



Oh, yes! Particularly, words spoken
from the heart. Unbeknownst to
the girl, hers were words that
Tokoyo had heard before.



IN THEM, TOKOYO
RECOGNIZED THE
FIRE THAT SHE HAD
FELT SO MANY TIMES
BEFORE.



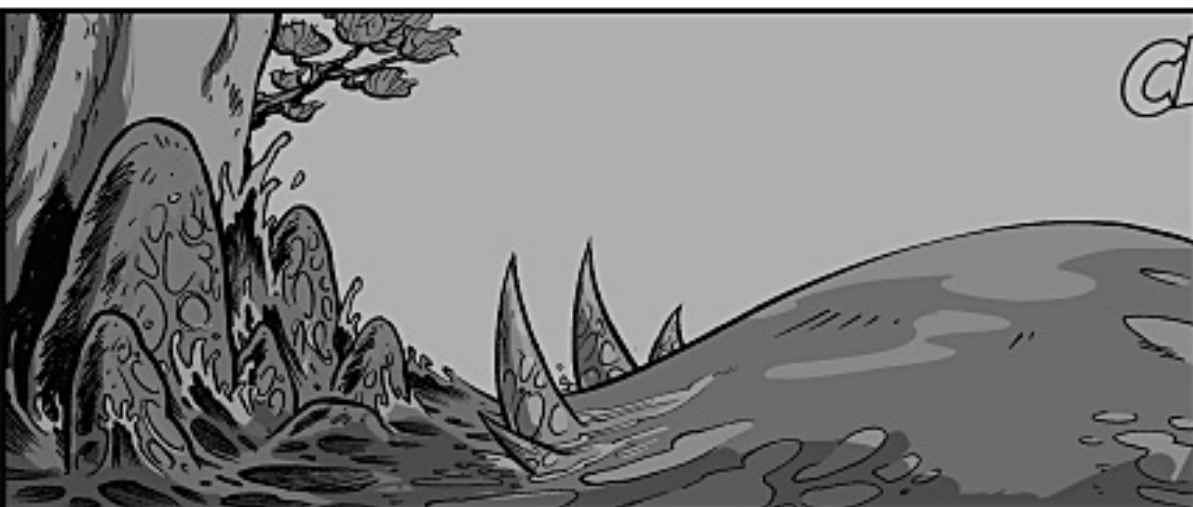
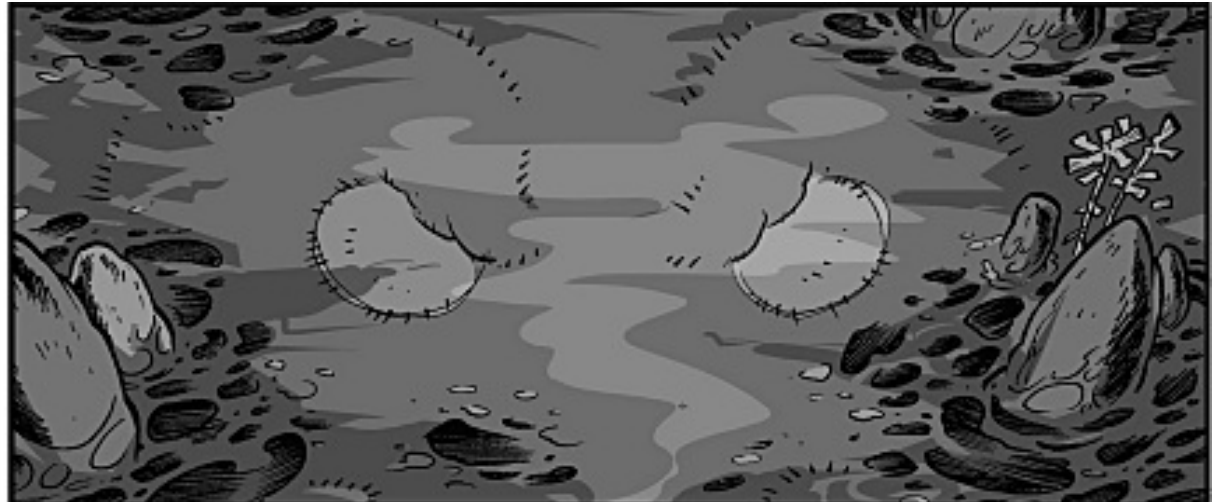
The same fire that fueled
her father to risk it all for
those he held dear.



VERY WELL,
LET MY BLADE
BE YOUR BLADE,
THEN. AND,
PRIEST...

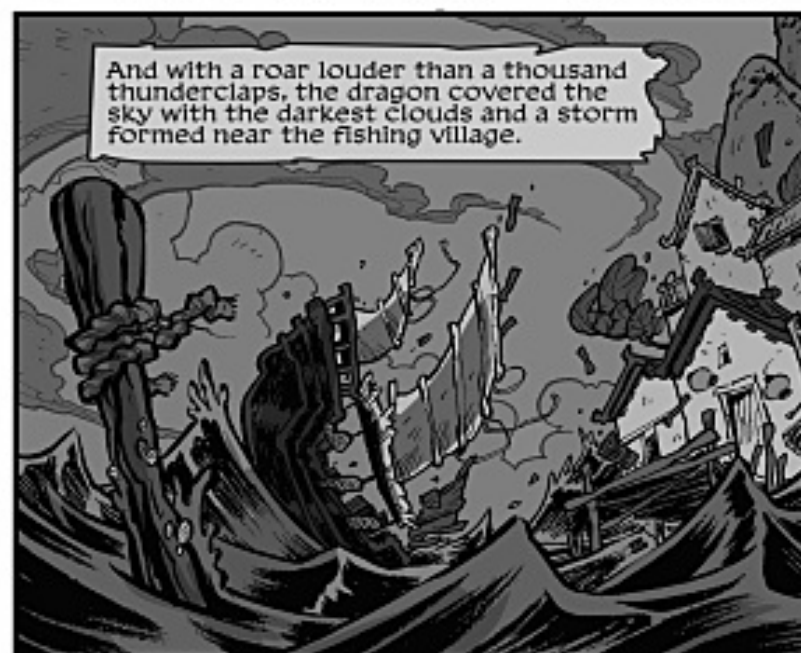


LET THE
MONSTER
KNOW WE ARE
HERE.

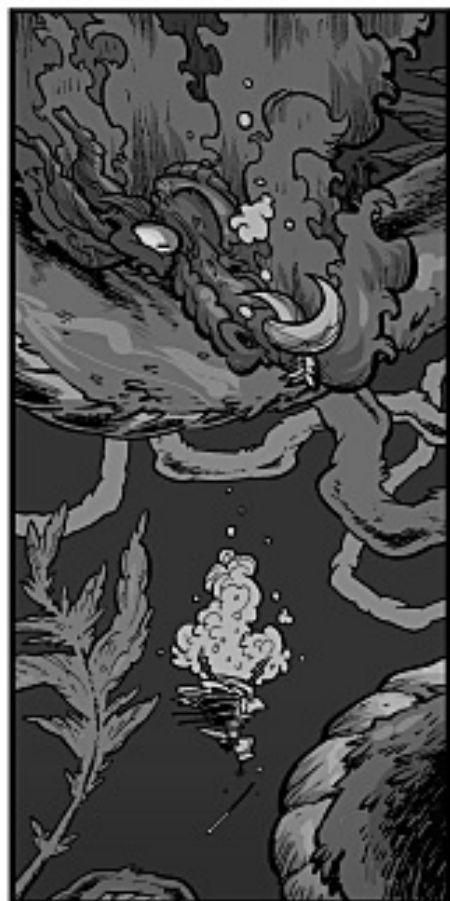
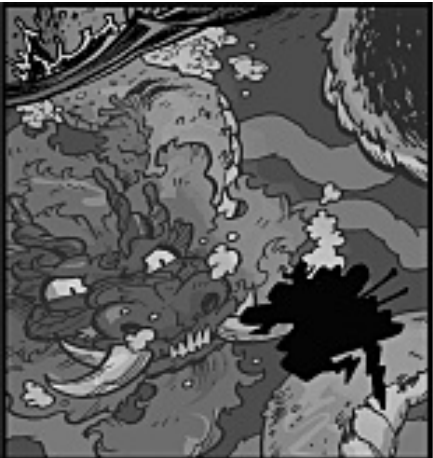




HAVE I
SHOWN ANY SIGN OF
WEAKNESS? OR HAVE YOU
FORGOTTEN, AS HUMANS
OFTEN DO, THAT IT IS
NOT I WHO SHALL RISE
BUT YOU WHO MUST
FALL?











AH, THERE
YOU ARE. DO
YOU SEE IT
NOW? DO YOU
UNDERSTAND?



YOUR
HANDS ARE
TIED, YOUNG
ONE. JUST AS
HOJO'S ARE.

HE KNOWS
THE POWER
THESE CARVINGS
POSSESS.



FOR EVERY
WOODEN HOUSE
I DESTROY, ITS
REFLECTION IN YOUR
LAND WILL FOLLOW
THE SAME FATE.

FOR WHATEVER
LIMB I TWIST ON
THIS STATUE, HE
WILL FEEL THE PAIN
AND AGONY AS IF IT
WERE HIS OWN.



NO
MATTER HOW
STRONG A MAN'S
CONVICTION
IS--



--THERE
IS ALWAYS
SOMETHING HE
WOULD SACRIFICE
EVERYTHING
FOR.

THERE IS
NOTHING YOU
CAN DO.

I HOLD
THE WILL OF
YOUR MASTER IN
MY HANDS.



AH! BUT WHAT
THE CREATURE DID
NOT KNOW WAS
THAT TOKOYO'S
ALLEGIANCE TO
LORD HOJO WAS
NO MORE.

THE BEAST
SHOWED THE GIRL NOT
THE CHAINS TO BIND HER
BUT THE TOOLS FOR HER
REVENGE, STARING
BACK AT HER FROM
WOODEN EYES.



IT'S
JUST NOT
FAIR!



TOKOYO,
ENOUGH!



BUT, FATHER,
AFTER ALL THESE
YEARS, YOU HAVE GIVEN
LORD HOJO YOUR
SERVICE AND YOUR
FRIENDSHIP. HOW CAN
HE DO THIS?



TRY TO
UNDERSTAND,
MY DEAR. THIS
GOES BEYOND
FRIENDSHIP.

DISHONOR
HAS BEEN
BROUGHT TO
THIS HOUSE,
THIS LAND.



IT IS LORD
HOJO'S DUTY TO
PUNISH THOSE
RESPONSIBLE.



BUT IT
WASN'T
YOUR
FAULT!





...
AND WHAT
WOULD YOU
HAVE ME
DO?



THERE IS NO
MAN OR WOMAN, NO
SOLDIER OR CHILD IN
THIS LAND THAT I
WOULDN'T GIVE MY
LIFE FOR.



DO YOU
EXPECT ME TO
BE ANY DIFFERENT
WHEN IT IS *YOU*,
MY OWN BLOOD,
WHO IS AT
RISK?



REMEMBER,
MY LOVE, NOT EVERY
BATTLE IS FOUGHT
WITH A SWORD. LET
ME BE THE BLADE
THAT PROTECTS
YOU NOW.



FATHER, I
SHOULD BE
THE ONE...



TOKOYO,
WHEN IT COMES
TO THE ONES
YOU LOVE--

--THERE'S NO
SACRIFICE BIG
ENOUGH.



SHE WAS THE
ONE MEANT TO BE
BANISHED?! AND, AFTER
LETTING HER FATHER
TAKE THE BLAME,
WOULD SHE STRIKE
HOJO'S STATUE AND
TAKE REVENGE?

I'LL SAY IT
AGAIN. WHAT A
HEROINE SHE
TURNED OUT
TO BE.

What? Oh no, it was
not Hojo's face carved
on the wood.



It was his
son's.



NAMU
AMIDA
BUTSU.



GRRR?

IT
SEEMS THE
REAL SACRIFICE
IS FINALLY
READY.



AND FOR
THE SAKE OF
YOUR MASTER, YOU
BETTER BE HERE
WHEN I RETURN,
SAMURAI.



QUICK! IF
WE'RE TO STOP
THE STORM WE
NEED TO CALM
THE BEAST!



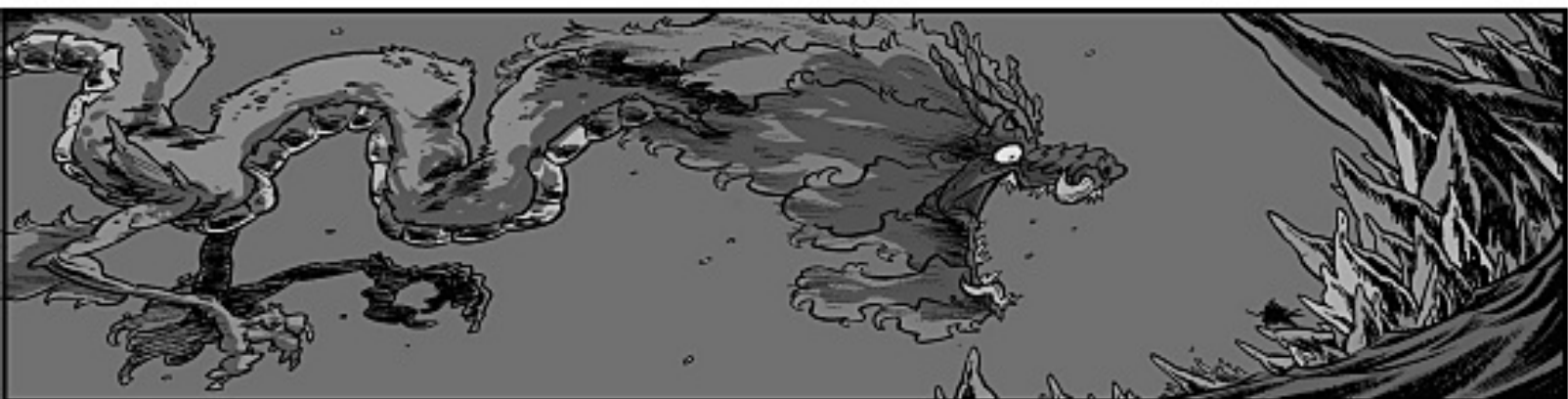
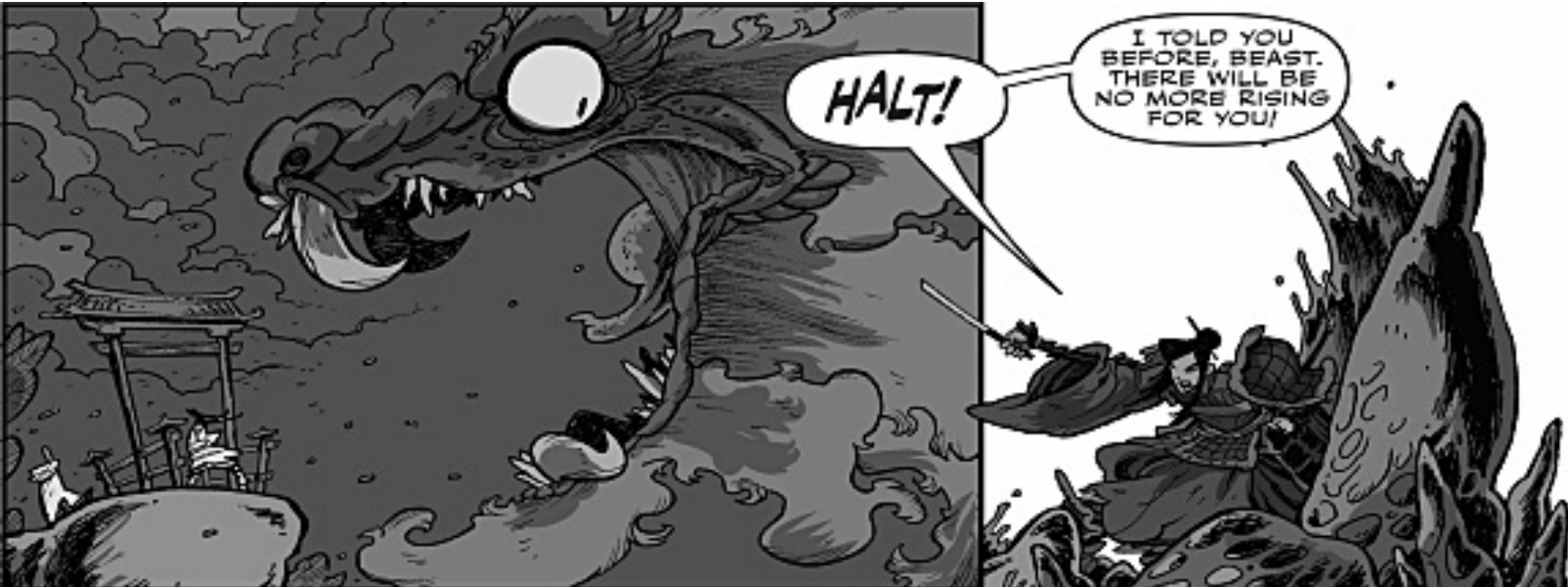
YOU DARE
SUMMON ME
AGAIN?

WE ONLY
WISH TO SAVE OUR
VILLAGE, AND IF
SACRIFICE IS THE
ONLY WAY THEN I
OFFER MYSELF TO
YOU, YOFUNE-
NUSHI!

SPURSH



YOU AND YOUR
VILLAGE ARE BEYOND
SAVING, GIRL--
RAAAWWWW



And just like that, both the beast Yofune-Nushi and the warrior Tokoyo sank into the depths of the abyss.

As everything went dark for Tokoyo, she felt, strangely, at *peace*.

She found, with her last stand, something she didn't know was missing.

Her father's decision to sacrifice for her had left Tokoyo empty. And for a long time, while she traveled the Oki Islands, she thought everything would be fixed by finding him.

Now, as life escaped her body, she understood that, by sacrificing herself for that girl, for her village, and with every fight she'd fought to help others, she gave *meaning* to her father's actions. To the future he had given her.

Ending the story of the brave warrior Tokoyo.

OR AT
LEAST, THAT'S
HOW IT *WOULD*
HAVE ENDED--

--if not for the courageous girl
who, grateful to the warrior who
had just defeated the dragon--

--dove into the
unwelcoming
waters to
rescue her.



It took three days
and three nights for
Tokoyo to recover.

A large, high-angle panel showing Tokoyo lying on a medical table in a room with a grid-patterned ceiling. She is wearing a white medical gown. To her right is a control panel with various buttons and a small screen. A basket sits on a shelf above the panel. The room has a futuristic, industrial feel.

When she finally woke up,
Tokoyo was no longer in armor
and her clothes were clean and
smelled like spring ought to.

Her wounds were
treated and the pain
was almost gone.



Confused, Tokoyo walked
across the strange room
towards the door--

A medium shot of Tokoyo walking away from the viewer. She has a confused expression. The background shows the same grid ceiling and some mechanical elements.



--just to find
herself in a very
familiar place.

A panel showing Tokoyo standing in a traditional Japanese room with sliding doors (shoji). She is looking out. The room has a tatami floor and some traditional decor.



WHERE WAS
SHE?

A panel showing a dog, possibly a Shikoku, looking up at a stone pillar or structure. The dog has a speech bubble above it.

Well, would you believe me if I told you she was back at Lord Hojo's palace?

See, when Tokoyo left in search for her banished father, she did so in a rush.

Hate can sometimes blind us to what's right in front of us.

It was never Lord Hojo's intention to send his friend, Oribe Shima, to such a horrible place as the Oki Islands. But, in order to protect Tokoyo, an exile had to be *staged*.

Instead, Hojo took Oribe to live inside the walls of his private garden, away from wandering eyes.

Once reunited, no words were spoken. But at that moment, Tokoyo realized--

--that it was not hate, but *shame* that had followed her to those Islands.

In the end? Free from the dragon Yofune-Nushi and the curse over his house, Lord Hojo entrusted his closest warriors with a *new* mission.

Tokoyo, along with her father, returned to the Oki Islands, vanquishing all remaining darkness from it.

But that, I'm afraid, is a *different* story.

...
THERE'S ALWAYS TIME FOR ANOTHER STORY.

HAHAHA!

THE END



THE MAKING OF

Jim Henson's™
THE STORYTELLER™
Dragons



A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT THE ART AND
CRAFT OF THE STORYTELLERS AND THEIR TALES.

With Art and Commentary by

Daniel Bayliss

Nathan Pude

Hannah Christenson

Torge Crona



Tale One Art by Daniel Bayliss

Daniel Bayliss Commentary: Big scary fangs! This is the introduction of the Serpent in the story and since we had already seen his appearance on the cover, the intention was to have a slightly more dynamic scene where we could see our main characters being terrorized by the big ferocious creature.



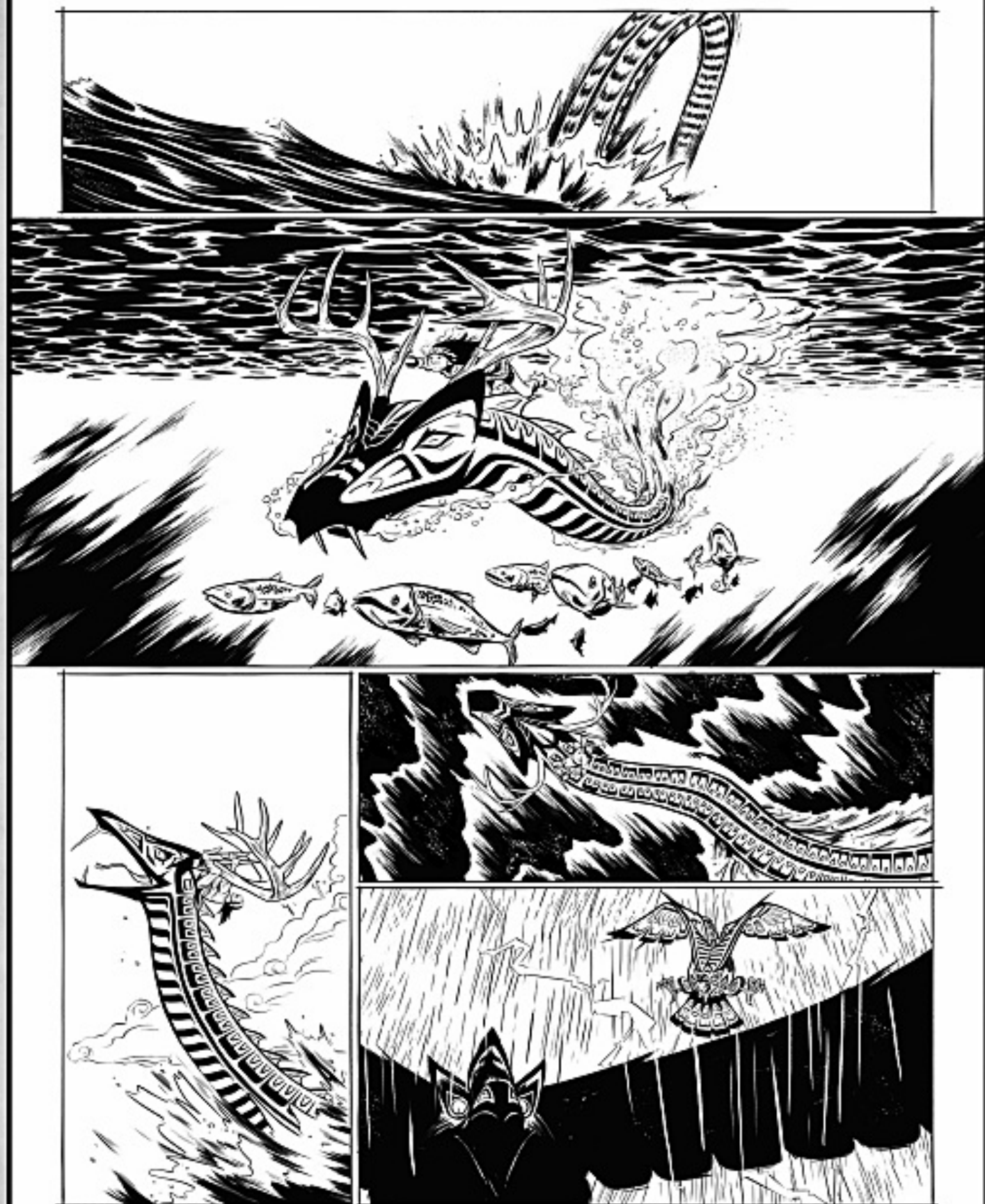
Tale One Art by Daniel Bayliss

DB: This was one of my favorite pages to draw. Here, I wanted to introduce our Thunderbirds in a visually interesting way, and to unashamedly show off their totem pole inspired designs for the first time.



Tale One Art by Daniel Bayliss

DB: On this page, I wanted to approach the design of the two islands in a way that reflects the emotional state of our two main characters. The first one, although small, is able to carry life, plants, and small birds and thus offers some hope. The second one is large and desolate and its atmosphere is far from encouraging for the father.



Tale One Art by Daniel Bayliss

DB: Father and son reunited! Despite the fact that the father was transformed into a strange monster, they both have fun and enjoy being together at last. This underwater scene was so much fun to do, a genius idea by script writer Fabian Rangel Jr.



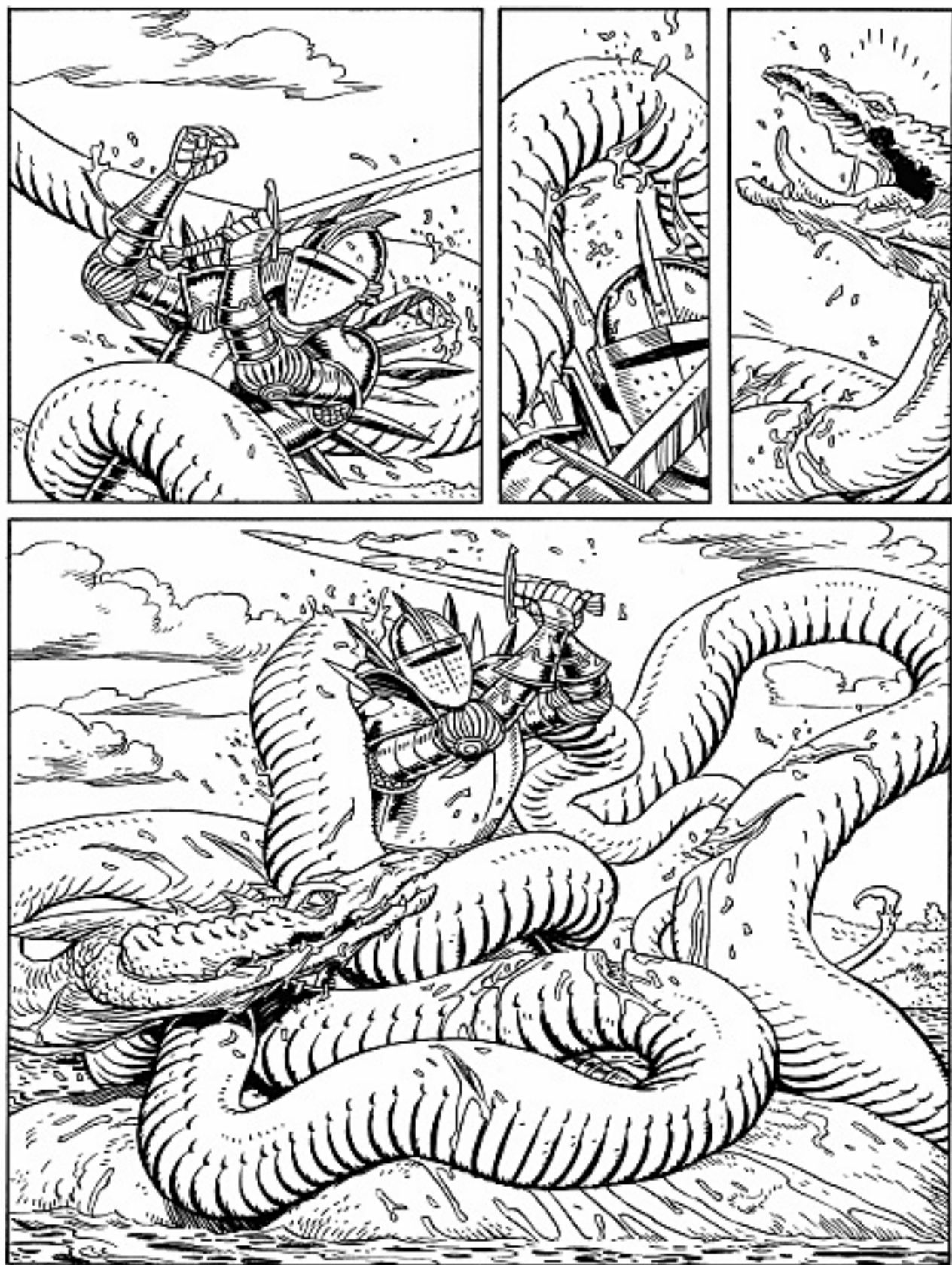
Tale Two Art by Nathan Pride

Nathan Pride Commentary: The tapestry images were (at top) drawn in a different style to connect with the Storyteller's great room where the tale is being told. In the second panel, I drew the wriggling body of the Worm, itself a part of the narrative, as a visual border to divide the top and bottom events of the knight's struggle to defeat the Worm.



Tale Two Art by Nathan Pride

NP: I envisioned John's return to Lambton in the style of an old west cinema entrance of a dusty figure shuffling into town from the desert. I narrowed John's focus upon the discovery of the devastation to his homeland. First, from the broader country, to its weary citizens and, finally, to his sickened father.



Tale Two Art by Nathan Pride

NP: Initially, I wanted to showcase more in the fight scenes with John and the Worm, but I had to trim down the battle to just three pages. I also struggled with how much gore I should illustrate within these scenes and the final death blow to the Worm. I hope I didn't make anyone too queasy.



Tale Two Art by Nathan Pride

NP: This final page was so much fun to write and draw. I really tried to capture the relationship of the dog and the Storyteller throughout "The Worm of Lambton". I absolutely loved their interactions from the television series and crafted the words and imagery to be true to that spirit for end of this story.



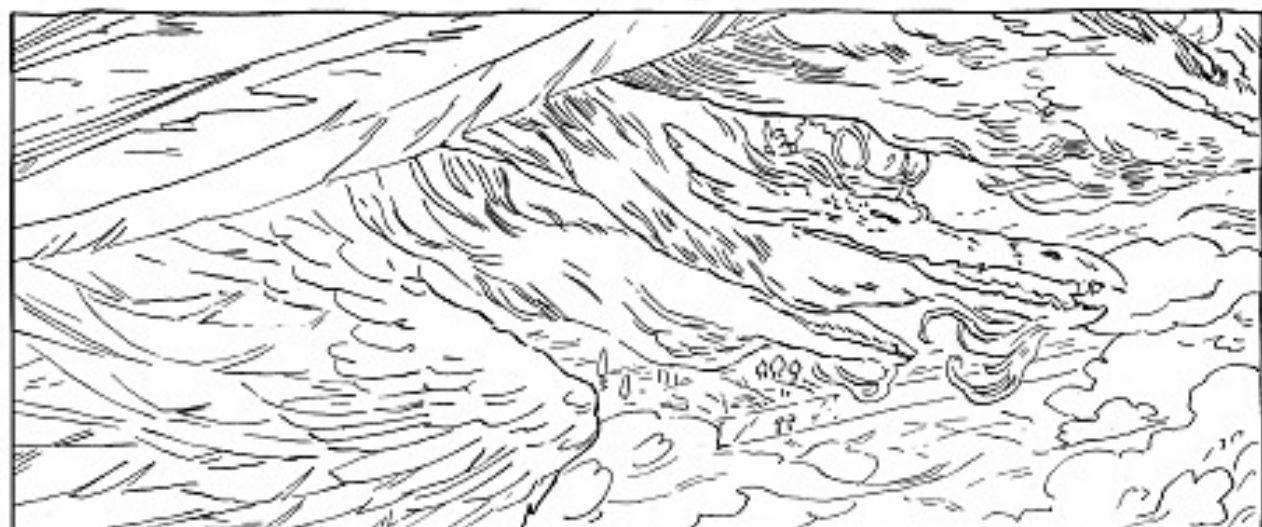
Tale Three Art by Hannah Christenson

Hannah Christenson Commentary: In this page, Albina and Mara are setting off on their journey but they're not pleased to be paired together and because of that, this page is rather cold, or maybe unfriendly feeling.



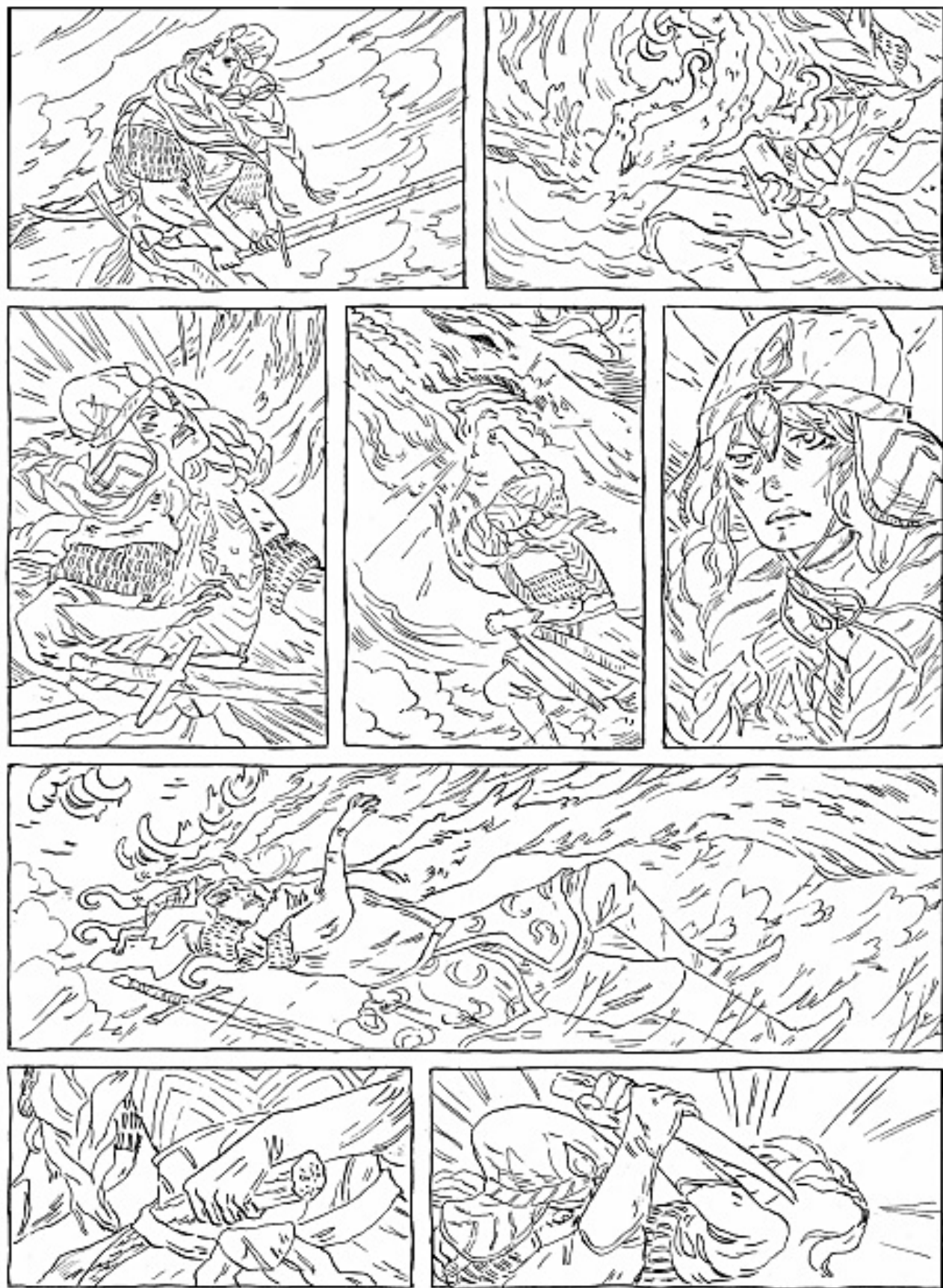
Tale Three Art by Hannah Christenson

HC: This is the first full shot of the dragon, Tugarin, so I wanted it to be imposing and threatening. He needed to fill up the whole page and have as much movement in it as I could get. I felt like the falling debris and color helped to add the drama Tugarin needed.



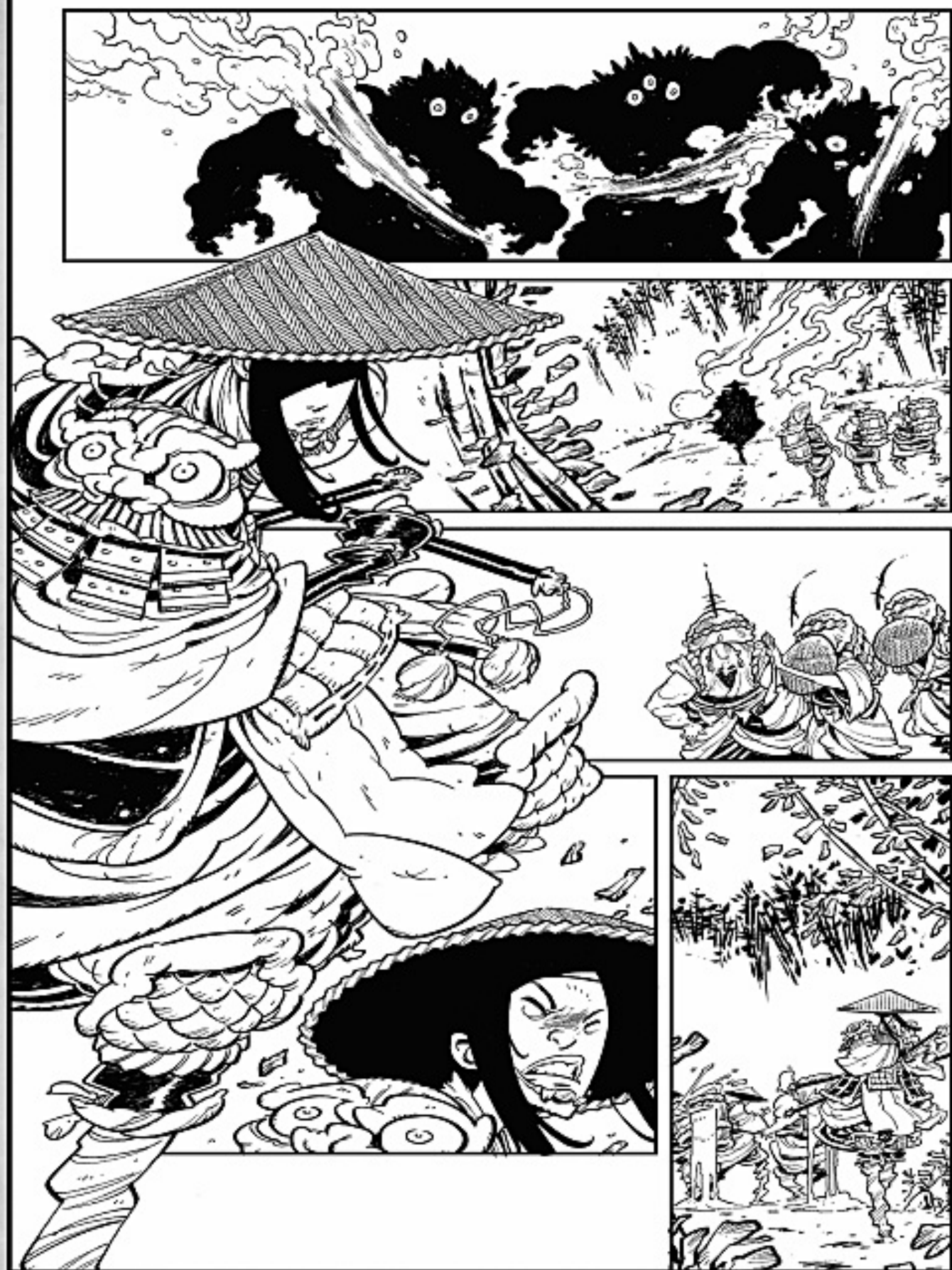
Tale Three Art by Hannah Christenson

HC: Here is where Albina comes together with Mara and prays for Tugarin to fall, which in the original story was a critical moment. These are three key moments that seemed to convey the story: 1) a large and presumably powerful Tugarin smugly flying above a small and visually weaker city, 2) Albina praying while still riding out to fight him, showing that she's asking for help, but isn't going to leave it up to prayer alone, and 3) Albina connecting with Mara as a sign of a united effort against Tugarin.



Tale Three Art by Hannah Christenson

HC: This page called for several panels in order to show several quick moments in a very tense action sequence. I felt that a higher number of panels were more effective in this case, rather than two or three main points.



Tale Four Art by Jorge Corona

Jorge Corona Commentary: I wanted the first appearance of Tokoyo to be a memorable one. Her design was the result of mixing her agility as a swordswoman with her stubbornness and strong personality. Having her dominating this page from top to bottom in a dynamic pose was the perfect way to show that.



Tale Four Art by Jorge Corona

JC: This page served to show the other side of Tokoyo. As the Storyteller explains, there is more than meets the eye when it comes to our heroine. Her motivations come from a secret she's been holding close to her heart. I wanted to keep that mystery for the first few pages by obscuring both her features as well as her father's. It all changes as the story progresses and we get to see more and more about the character's past until the truth is fully revealed.



Tale Four Art by Jorge Corona

JC: The other major introduction! Finally, the dragon Yofune-Nushi shows up. I really wanted for this page to be a contrast in size and proportions. This beast is meant to be larger than life and as such he bleeds out of the layout in every possible way.



JC: This was a pivotal moment for the story. Not only is an important element of the plot revealed, but it is also the moment when both the story of Tokoyo and the story of the Oki Island's curse, converge.



Tale Four Art by Jorge Corona

JC: The stakes were raised and the layout became a splash page where our two main characters faced each other with the fate of a whole land spread right in front of them...and the reader.



TALE ONE VARIANT COVER

DAVID PETERSEN

INKS (ABOVE) AND FINAL ART (RIGHT)





TALE ONE JACKPOT VARIANT COVER

CORY GODBEY

PENCILS (ABOVE) AND FINAL ART (RIGHT)





TALE ONE BOOM! TEN YEARS VARIANT COVER

KYLA VANDERKLUGT



TALE ONE FRIED PIE VARIANT COVER

IAN HERRING





the TORYTELLERS

DANIEL BAYLISS is a comic book artist and illustrator from Mexico. He studied architecture at Universidad de Sonora, and came to notoriety after working on the *Batman* fan fiction "The Deal," written by Gerardo Preciado. He made his debut on the BOOM! Studios mini series *Translucid*, written by Chondra Echert and Claudio Sanchez. He also worked on the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* #0 backup story, written by Mairghread Scott. He is currently working on the BOOM! Studios series *Kennel Block Blues* alongside writer Ryan Ferrier.

NATHAN PRIDE was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1970. His childhood was filled with exposure to lots of cartoons, Saturday afternoon horror movies, random comic books from a pharmacy spinner rack, and early 80's MTV videos. Those visual images, combined with his exploration and love of the natural world, has generated a style that is organic, textured, and fantastical. His artwork has appeared in *Mage: The Awakening* and *Scarred Lands* RPG books from White Wolf Publishing and a Barnes & Noble hardcover collection entitled *Library of Wonder: Jules Verne*. His color comic work appears in the 2011 Eisner Award-winning anthology *Mouse Guard: Legends of the Guard* Vol. 1, as a contributor to *Reading With Pictures* Vol. 2, and multiple works for *The Devastator* comedy-zine. Nathan resides in Michigan where he enjoys exploring the surroundings—rural and urban—and its changing seasons.

HANNAH CHRISTENSON creates illustrations for books, comics, editorial, and games. Her work has been recognized by a variety of publications including *The Society of Illustrators* and *Spectrum*. When she's not working, Hannah can most often be found adventuring on some side-quest in search of treasures with her trusty canine sidekicks, Lucca and Mars.

JORGE CORONA was born in Maracaibo, Venezuela. After years of working as a graphic designer and art director for several companies back home, he was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship and attended the Savannah College of Art and Design in which he followed his lifelong dream of becoming a sequential artist. Fan of cartoons, comics, movies, and all things *Batman*, Jorge has worked on a diverse group of titles and genres, always with a fascination for superheroes and fantasy. Most notably, the DC Comics series *We Are Robin* and the creator owned all-ages fantasy series *Feathers*. In 2015, he received the Russ Manning Promising Newcomer Award.



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